

Fire Risk Assessment for St John's Methodist Church complex, Argyle Road, Whitstable, CT5 1JS

Area: Lobby, kitchen, toilets, Epworth Room, Quadrangle, Aldersgate Room and Office

Use: Church activities, social functions, meetings and activities. Aldersgate Room and Office are mainly for Circuit Superintendent and Circuit Administrator use.

1. Identify Fire Hazards

1.1. Sources of Ignition

- 1.1.1. Electrical sockets and lighting
- 1.1.2. Portable electric heaters
- 1.1.3. User group equipment (music players, etc)
- 1.1.4. Kitchen cooker, microwave and other kitchen appliances

1.2. Sources of Fuel

- 1.2.1. Paper materials
- 1.2.2. Books on shelves
- 1.2.3. Soft furnishings (seating)

1.3. Sources of Oxygen

- 1.3.1. Doors
- 1.3.2. Windows
- 1.3.3. Skylights

2. People at Risk

- 2.1. Church members including children and the elderly
- 2.2. A small number of members who are vulnerable or who have mobility difficulties
- 2.3. Other adults and children where rooms have been hired for events
- 2.4. Club members, both adult and young children
- 2.5. Circuit Superintendent and Circuit Administrator plus Circuit visitors

3. Evaluate, Remove, Reduce and Protect from Risk

3.1. Evaluate the risk of the fire occurring

- 3.1.1. The building is within a no-smoking complex
- 3.1.2. No naked flames are permitted, except for occasional use of candles for church activities; this would be under adult control
- 3.1.3. No other sources of ignition are permitted within the areas, except for the kitchen
- 3.1.4. Operation of kitchen equipment is strictly limited to a small number of church members who have attended an approved catering course
- 3.1.5. Electrical checks are carried out iaw Methodist Insurance guidelines
- 3.1.6. The risk of a fire occurring is assessed as low

3.2. Evaluate the risk to people from a fire starting in the premises

- 3.2.1. Lighting is good throughout and egress is via a wide corridor, either through a rear fire exit or through double front doors to the complex. Total length of corridor and lobby from front doors to rear fire exit is approximately 25 metres

- 3.2.2. The kitchen is mainly used for refreshments. For occasional events where catering is required, operation of kitchen equipment is strictly limited to those persons specifically authorised for catering
 - 3.2.3. No individual room, and collectively the whole area, is assessed as capable of holding sufficient people to cause problems with egress through the exits
 - 3.2.4. Church events, where there might be a small number of members who have mobility difficulties, are controlled by stewards appointed by the minister. Stewards would ensure appropriate measures are taken to evacuate those who need assistance
 - 3.2.5. The risk to people from a fire starting in the premises is assessed as very low
- 3.3. Remove and reduce the hazards that may cause a fire
- 3.3.1. There is a microwave oven and a cooker in the kitchen, together with other kitchen appliances
 - 3.3.2. No other potential sources of ignition have been identified
- 3.4. Remove and reduce the risks to people from a fire
- 3.4.1. The new build was completed in 2007 and comprises a predominantly brick and glass structure, partially flat-roofed and partially slated. All glazing panels are double glazed within uPVC and metal frames; there are no curtains or blinds
 - 3.4.2. In most cases, personnel in this area are either routing through the lobby or en route to the toilets. There are two meeting rooms, a Vestry and a kitchen. All were built in accordance with building regulations prevailing at the time, all are well lit, and the kitchen and meeting rooms have fire-rated doors with viewing panels
 - 3.4.3. There are two exits from the area, front and rear as described in 3.2.1 above
 - 3.4.4. The building has a fire alarm system, fire extinguishers and emergency lighting. These are regularly maintained and checked by a commercial fire and safety company (Crimefighter Alarms Ltd).
 - 3.4.5. The HM Government Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guide (ISBN: 978 1 85112 820 4) indicates at page 66 that for a low risk building with double doors in excess of 1.050m width, up to 240 people could be safely evacuated from the building.
 - 3.4.6. The maximum practical capacity of the lobby, toilets, Epworth Room, Aldersgate Room and the Vestry is assessed as 100 people and thus any risk to people from a fire is assessed as extremely low.
 - 3.4.7. The risk to people from a fire in the kitchen is potentially high because of the gas cooker. However, the kitchen is fitted with a fire detection system and the church limits operation of the cooker to those persons specifically authorised for catering. The maximum practical capacity of the kitchen is assessed as 10 people and the risk to people from a fire is therefore reduced to medium.