

# Hornsea United Reformed Church Health and Safety Policy



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## HORNSEA UNITED REFORMED CHURCH VIEWS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Hornsea United Reformed Church has a duty, under the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, European Directives and other associated legislation, to protect the health and safety of all its employees and to provide suitable provisions for their welfare, whilst at work. It also has a responsibility under the same Act not to expose to risks to health and safety other persons, who, though not employed by the Hornsea United Reformed Church, can be affected by its undertaking and activities.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Elders wish to pursue a policy to promote Health & Safety at work and seek the co-operation of all employees and volunteers for that purpose. We will provide working conditions which comply with the relevant statutory requirements and officially approved codes of practice that are designed to ensure good standards of Health & Safety:

- the working environment is safe and without risk to your health and that adequate provision is made with regard to the facilities and arrangements for your welfare at work;
- we provide adequate resources to ensure that proper provision can be made for Health & Safety;
- risk assessments of equipment, premises, procedures and processes are carried out and periodically reviewed;
- we provide and maintain systems of work that are safe and without risk to health;
- arrangements for use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances for use at work are safe and without risks to health;
- we provide you with such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to secure your Health & Safety at work and the safety of others who may be affected by your actions;
- the provision and maintenance of all equipment is safe and without risk to health;
- the place of work is safe and that there is safe access to and exit from the workplace;
- monitoring activities are undertaken to maintain agreed standards.

### Management & supervisory responsibility

The Elders, through the Property Committee, will be responsible for implementing and maintaining this policy throughout the organisation and will ensure that Health & Safety considerations are given priority in planning and day-to-day supervision of work.

### Personal responsibility

You have a duty, whilst at work, to take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself

and of other people who may be affected by your acts or omissions and to co-operate with the fulfilling of statutory duties. You must not interfere with, or misuse, anything provided in the interest of Health & Safety.

### **Amendments to the policy**

The Health & Safety Policy will be reviewed at least once a year and will be amended and updated as necessary.

### **Accident at work - accident reporting**

All accidents, injuries, and cases of ill-health caused by, or affecting, your work must be reported without delay. If you are injured, no matter how slight your injury may appear, you must always report it to an Elder or Group Leader and ensure that the details of your accident or injury are entered in the Accident Book. The details of the accident/injury will be entered by a first-aider or group leader.

All dangerous occurrences and 'near miss' incidents should also be reported in the same way.

You must not work if you have taken medication or any other substance which could adversely affect your ability to operate equipment or in any other way inhibit your ability to work safely.

If you see a situation in which a potential accident could occur or where an injury could be sustained by anyone in the building you should report it immediately to the designated Elder.

You must report any damage to property.

You must read and comply with all notices, instructions, hazard & warning signs provided from time to time for your information.

### **First aid provision**

A number of people are qualified to give first aid. A list of first-aiders is available on the noticeboards.

### **Fire - General**

As far as is reasonably practicable we will take steps to minimise the risk of fire. Selected individuals within the Church are appointed as Fire Marshals. They have been given training in basic fire prevention measures, use of fire equipment, and evacuation procedures. Fire drills will be held periodically.

You are required to observe the following:

- Corridors, stairways, steps, and other escape routes must be kept free from obstructions (such as rubbish bags, deliveries, wrappings, equipment etc.) which block the escape and/or obscure alarm equipment, extinguishers or signs indicating fire exits.

- Fire doors must never be propped open (with extinguishers or wedges of any kind). Access doors linked to the Fire Alarm System will fail to secure (open) in the event of a fire alarm actuation.
- Any faults with lighting or other equipment should be reported to the caretaker or convener of the property committee along with any concerns you may have about fire hazards, so that appropriate measures can be taken to eliminate the problem.

### **In the event of fire**

Generally, in the event of fire, you should:

- Raise the alarm;
- Follow the specific building instructions in respect of evacuation and listen to instructions from your Safety Representative;
- Assemble at the designated fire assembly point (attempts to extinguish the fire should only be made if it is safe to do so);
- Do not run, use lifts or stop to collect personal belongings;
- Do not re-enter the building until instructed that it is safe to do so.

### **Bomb alerts**

- It is not possible to be prescriptive about what to do in the event of a bomb warning, but the following general rules should be observed:
- Do exactly what you are told by the emergency services, either directly or via the Premises Management or staff;
- Do whatever is necessary and sensible to reduce the risk of injury, i.e., if there is a known bomb threat and you have not been told to evacuate the building, retire to the safest area within your building - This will normally be a building core area, away from the risk of broken / flying glass;
- If you are in the building out of normal working hours and an incident takes place, either directly affecting the building or in the close vicinity, the most senior person present must take responsibility for notifying the management of the situation;
- The safety of staff and visitors is always paramount. Never jeopardise personal safety in the interest of safeguarding property or information;
- If the building is seriously damaged as a result of a major incident which occurs outside normal working hours or at a time when you are not present in the building, you should not return to the building until you have received instructions from the Eldership.

### **Manual handling**

When handling loads manually, you must use the methods which are indicated by the management to reduce the risk of injury. All staff involved in manual handling will receive appropriate training.

### **Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)**

PAT testing is used to evaluate the safety of electrical appliances and equipment. It reduces the risk of accidents, fires, and injuries by thoroughly assessing appliances for potential faults.

Certified PAT professionals will conduct the testing annually to ensure compliance with safety regulations. Any electrical appliance that has not been PAT tested will not be able to be used at Hornsea United Reformed Church until such times as this has been undertaken.

## **Hazardous Substances**

The use of harmful chemicals and other substances hazardous to health is somewhat limited in Hornsea United Reformed Church, but their safe use needs to be considered.

The assessment process is often referred to as a 'COSHH Assessment'. COSHH stands for 'Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (Regulations)'. The assessment considers what the substance is, how much / how often it is used, and with the measures taken to limit the exposure.

This policy aims to demonstrate the legal compliance within Hornsea United Reformed Church.

**Substances in common use** are confined to proprietary domestic products such as cooking and cleaning fluids and other similar materials, used in the kitchen area.

The hazards and precautions are labelled on the products and the residual control measures are provided by the trained kitchen personnel, supplying hand / eye protection, and eye wash facilities. These substances are kept in the kitchen area, away from members of the public.

All chemicals should remain in their original containers. Containers which are commonly used for other things - such as jam jars and pop bottles - are forbidden owing to the possibility of mistaken identity.

It is preferable to restrict the use of harmful substances where an alternative exists which could be used to lower the risk e.g., use a proprietary toilet cleaner fluid which does not have a hazard symbol on the pack.

Many garden chemicals that are intended for 'home garden use only' and any work involving these will be carried out under the direction of a Church Elder.

**Other harmful agents** which might be encountered within the building structure:

- Asbestos (Survey completed 31/03/2016)
- Working near bird faeces (especially pigeons) can cause 'psittacosis', a pneumonia-like disease.
- 'Leptospirosis' (known as Weil's Disease) can be a concern for work in locations where vermin are, or have been, present.

Any work above will be carried out under the direction of a Church Elder / professional person and in the case of asbestos must involve a specialist approved contractor.

## **Issues to be aware of**

Health effects.

Substances can be responsible for a number of different health conditions including:

- Skin disorders, such as dermatitis and irritation

- Asthma and other respiratory disorders
- Chemical burns
- Allergic reactions
- Chronic conditions, e.g., cancer caused by repeated exposure to a substance
- Absorption of a toxic substance through the skin, respiratory system or eyes.

The effects of exposure to a harmful substance can be immediate (acute), such as a chemical burn, or be longer-term (chronic), such as dermatitis caused by continuous cleaning work.

Substances can enter, or affect, the body in different ways:

- Contact with the skin
- Absorption via the eyes
- Respiration of dusts, vapours, fumes and gases
- Puncture through the skin or entry through an open wound
- Ingestion (eating)

A common problem is people failing to wash their hands after handling a substance. If the person then eats, drinks, or smokes with the substance on their hands, the chemical then enters the body.

Similarly, rubbing the eyes and the parts of the face near the eyes and nose can transfer the substance into the eyes or nose, where blood vessels are very close to the skin surface.

These areas are more vulnerable, and some substances can enter the body through these areas.

### **Visitors and Contractors**

We have a responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) to ensure that people who are not employees of the church are not exposed to risks to their health & safety while working for the church or visiting our premises.

### **Vertical Access Lift and Disabled Refuge Intercom System**

A **Stannah Vertical Access Lift (Model AV437235)** is installed in the **Church Front Welcome Area** to provide accessible movement between the **Ground Floor** and **First Floor Upper Room** for wheelchair users and persons with reduced mobility.

The lift must only be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the following safety requirements:

#### **General Safety**

- The lift is intended primarily for **wheelchair users, people with limited mobility, and those assisting them.**
- Children must **not operate the lift unless supervised by a responsible adult.**
- Users must **not exceed the maximum safe load displayed in the lift.**
- Wheelchairs, mobility aids and occupants must be positioned **fully within the platform before operation.**
- Hands, clothing and personal belongings must be kept **clear of the platform edges, entry and exit door and moving parts.**

## Operation

- Ensure **entry and exit door is fully closed** before operating the lift.
- Use the **designated control buttons only** to move the lift between levels.
- Do not attempt to **force door, override safety devices, or interfere with lift mechanisms**.
- If the lift stops unexpectedly or a fault occurs, **do not attempt to exit the lift platform unsafely**.

## Maintenance and Inspection

- The lift will be **regularly inspected and serviced by a qualified engineer** in accordance with statutory requirements and the manufacturer's guidance.
- Any faults, unusual noises, or operational issues must be **reported immediately to a Church Elder or the Property Committee**.
- The lift must not be used if it is **clearly marked as out of service**.

## Emergency Situations

- In the event of a fire alarm or emergency evacuation, **the lift must not be used unless specifically designated for evacuation by trained personnel**.
- Users should follow the **church evacuation procedures and directions given by Fire Marshals**.

A **Disabled Refuge Point Intercom System** supplied by **Cameo System Ltd** is installed in the **Church Front Welcome Area** and in the **First Floor Upper Room** to allow individuals who cannot immediately evacuate to communicate with assistance personnel during an emergency.

## Use of the Refuge System

- The refuge point is a **temporary safe waiting location** for individuals who cannot use stairs during an evacuation.
- Pressing the **intercom call button** connects the user with the designated responder or control point within the building.
- Users should **clearly communicate their location and any assistance required**.

## Responsibilities

- Fire Marshals or designated responders must **monitor the refuge system during evacuations** and coordinate assistance.
- Individuals using the refuge point should **remain calm and wait for assistance unless instructed otherwise by emergency personnel**.

## Maintenance

- The refuge intercom system will be **periodically tested and maintained** to ensure it remains operational.
- Any faults or damage must be **reported immediately to the Property Committee or Health & Safety Coordinator**.

## General Accessibility Equipment Safety

All accessibility equipment, including lifts and refuge communication systems, must:

- Remain **unobstructed and accessible at all times**.
- Be **used only for their intended purpose**.
- Be **regularly inspected and maintained**.

- Have any faults **reported immediately**.

Failure to follow these procedures may create a safety risk for building users and may result in the equipment being taken out of service until repairs are completed.

**Signed (Church Elders):**

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