

Church Policy on Fire Safety

Part One: Fire Safety Policy Statement of Intent

1. The Church recognises and accepts its responsibilities for providing, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy environment with a view to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of those who use the church premises. This responsibility includes ensuring the appropriate control of risk relating to fire on the Church premises and in the conduct of its business.
2. As such, the Church shall maintain a Fire Safety Management System, incorporating assessments of risk and appropriate control measures to reduce risk and mitigate as far as is reasonably practicable, its effects on human life, health and on property.
3. The Church shall consult, where necessary, with all employees, leaders, helpers and volunteers on the implementation of any changes to this policy;
4. The Church shall ensure that adequate funds and resources are made available for carrying out this policy.

Part Two: Responsibilities for Fire Safety

5. Overall responsibility for Fire Safety within the premises and the operation of the business of Gorse Hill Baptist Church lies with:

The Health, Safety & Environmental Health Officer (HSEHO)

At present, the Responsible Person for Fire Safety is Jonathan Murphy ACIEH

6. All employees, leaders, helpers and volunteers will;
 - 6.1 Cooperate as far as is necessary with the Church in its efforts to meet its responsibilities under this policy and all relevant legislation
 - 6.2 Ensure that they shall not intentionally or recklessly neither interfere with nor misuse anything provided as a fire safety measure or equipment including but not limited to extinguishers, call points and detection heads
 - 6.3 Fully participate in all of the training provided by the Church in relation to fire safety and emergency procedures with the intention of minimising risk to life, health and property.
 - 6.4 Report to the Church's HSEHO, using the established channels, all fire safety incidents and near misses, and all damaged or defective equipment as soon as is reasonably practicable

Part Three: Arrangements for Fire Safety

7. The Church shall undertake and maintain written risk assessments specifically relating to fire safety for the church premises and for all activities undertaken on those premises and off those premises in the course of its business, which identify appropriate control measures for each fire safety hazard identified.
8. All Fire Risk Assessments shall be reviewed every year, upon an incidence of a near miss or as warranted by major changes in operating practices, legislation or nature of the building. Significant changes in the number of persons affected, storage of materials within the building or furnishings would constitute a major change in operating practices.
9. Responsibility for ensuring the conduct of Fire Risk Assessments, and implementation of resulting control measures identified by such risk assessments, lies with:
The Health, Safety & Environmental Health Officer (HSEHO)
10. All employees, leaders, helpers and volunteers shall be trained on the contents of the fire risk assessment for all such activities that the employee, leader, helper or volunteer is reasonably likely to take part in.

Responsibility for training Team Leaders lies with:

The Health, Safety & Environmental Health Officer (HSEHO)

Responsibility for training other relevant team members lies with:

The Activity Team Leaders

11. The Church shall establish and maintain an appropriate Fire Detection & Alert System within all of its premises. Responsibility for the maintenance of these systems lies with

Main Premises: Facilities Team Leader

Manse: Occupier

12. The Main Building Fire Detection & Alert System shall be tested regularly within the installer's guidance to ensure full working order. Responsibility for this testing lies with:

The Health, Safety & Environmental Health Officer (HSEHO) or delegated as he/she sees fit.

At Present, the person responsible for weekly testing is: Jonathan Murphy ACIEH

At Present, William Hale & Co carry out regular six monthly testing

13. The Church shall provide and maintain a Secondary Lighting System that is capable of sustaining necessary illumination for a minimum of one hour in all escape routes in the event of disruption to the main power supply, and shall test this system in line with installer guidance.
14. The Church shall establish & maintain suitable procedures for the emergency evacuation of the building and any events taking place off-site of the main building in the course of its business. These procedures shall be maintained within the Church's Business Continuity Plan/ Major Risk Assessment, and form part of the training for all persons exercising a position of responsibility within the life of the Church.

Responsibility for the Development of Emergency Evacuation Plans lies with:

The Health, Safety & Environmental Health Officer (HSEHO)

Responsibility for the Business Continuity Plan/ Major Risk Assessment lies with:
The Administration Team Leader

Responsibility for ensuring all responsible persons are trained on the contents of the Business Continuity Plan/ Major Risk Assessment lies with:
The Administration Team Leader

15. The Church shall establish and maintain systems of record keeping ensuring that it can demonstrate appropriate due diligence and compliance with regulations in regards to fire safety. Responsibility for such record keeping lies with:
The Health, Safety & Environmental Health Officer (HSEHO)
16. The Church shall provide and maintain appropriate and sufficient fire fighting equipment (FFE) and training in the use of such equipment to appropriate persons. Responsibility for FFE lies with: **The Health, Safety & Environmental Health Officer (HSEHO)**
17. Such FFE shall be placed in appropriate positions with regard given to the safety of its location, conspicuous positioning and proximity to routes of exit used in an emergency. Regard will also be given to placing FFE near to the area in which it would be needed without being too close to any potential fire so as to render it inaccessible in an emergency.
18. All visitors to the main site that are left unsupervised (e.g. contractors) shall be made aware upon arrival of the current provision for fire safety within the premises. Responsibility for Contractors lies with: **The Facilities Team Leader**
19. All furnishings purchased for the church building and for use in the course of Church business shall be of fire retardant material, and all existing such furnishing shall be kept in good repair, with any exposed polyurethane foam removed without undue delay. Responsibility for furnishings lies with: **The Facilities Team Leader**
20. A conspicuous summary of the fire action plan shall be placed alongside conspicuous Manual Call Points at every final exit point from the building. Responsibility for building manual call points and fire action plan summaries lies with: **The Facilities Team Leader**
21. The Church shall conduct, annually, at least one drill of a full evacuation and record its occurrence, and subsequent observances and recommendations for improvements, as appropriate. Responsibility for fire drills lies with:
The Health, Safety & Environmental Health Officer (HSEHO)
22. The Church shall establish and maintain appropriate escape routes from its premises and off site activities to final places of safety, giving due regard to the varying needs of employees, volunteers and guests, ensuring that all doors that form part of an escape route can be used without keys or passcodes. All Employees and volunteers shall ensure at all times that means of escape remain free from obstruction. All instructions regarding the use of escape routes e.g. door handle instructions, shall be plainly seen in all circumstances and easy to understand.
23. The Church shall take measures to ensure the appropriate use of fire retardant doors to ensure the appropriate control of fire on its premises, making available instruments such as electro-magnetic door retainers as appropriate.

24. Should any person within the life of the church become aware of a regular user of Church facilities and services who may need additional support in the event of an evacuation, they shall make this known to the HSEHO and relevant team leaders who shall put in place any additional support required in the form of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan
25. The Church shall provide and maintain clear emergency signage within its premises that follows nationally accepted standards for clarity to all users of the Church building
26. The Church shall establish and maintain the following monitoring schedule for all measures put in place to promote fire safety in its premises and during the conduct of its business off-site:
 - 26.1 Means of Escape: Daily, or upon every use of the facility or site, and no less than weekly
 - 26.2 Fire Alarm: Weekly full testing of one Manual Call Point and visual testing of all MCP's
 - 26.3 Fire Fighting Equipment: Monthly visual inspection and annual servicing by external contractor
 - 26.4 Emergency Lighting: Visual inspection upon each use of that area of the building, and not less than weekly; Monthly testing of each light, Annual testing of whole System

This Policy should be reviewed annually or where required by significant changes to Church practices or circumstances by the HSEHO

This policy was reviewed and adopted by a resolution of the Gorse Hill Baptist Church Diaconate at a Meeting held on **Thursday 6th Jan 2022**.