

15. Health & Safety Legislation and village halls

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1. Introduction

Everyone running a village hall or community building will want to ensure the safety of the people using it. The proliferation of health and safety legislation can, however, seem daunting to volunteer village hall committee members. The aim of this information sheet is to explain the key statutory requirements as they affect village halls and to provide volunteer village hall committee members with the information and documentation they need to address them. Sample documents are given in the appendices.

The emphasis in legislation is prevention of accidents through risk assessment. This means that the key action committees need to take is to set up a routine to look at their own premises and equipment, assess the possible risk of an accident occurring and take steps to minimise any risks. Records are essential.

Invaluable information from the following organisations has been used in the preparation of this information sheet and is gratefully acknowledged:

- Safety Executive (HSE)
- Health and Safety Handbook for Voluntary and Community Organisations (Directory of Social Change)
- Surrey Community Action
- Oxfordshire Rural Community Council
- Cotswold District Council
- The Fire Protection Association
- Aon (brokers for the Allianz Cornhill village hall insurance policy).

This guidance does not cover in detail responsibilities of village hall committees under food hygiene legislation, which are covered in ACRE Village Hall Information Sheet 20. More detailed guidance on fire safety is given in **Village Hall Information Sheet 37, Fire safety in village halls**.

It should be noted that whilst ACRE has endeavoured to ensure the accuracy of this publication it cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions.

2. The responsibilities of village hall committees

Those managing village halls and similar community buildings (e.g. village hall management committees, community association committees or parish councils) have a 'duty of care' under common law towards individuals and organisations to avoid carelessly causing personal injury or damage to property. Management committees also have a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 to take 'reasonably practicable' steps to ensure the health and safety of employees and others who use the hall, i.e. volunteers, members of the public and contractors. In addition to these general responsibilities recent pieces of legislation have introduced specific health and safety requirements. The legislation is described in Section 3.

District council environmental health departments and the Health and Safety Executive have responsibility for enforcing health and safety requirements. Local authorities make inspections to ensure, for example, playgroups or nurseries meet Ofsted standards. These inspections, although demanding, are valuable in helping to ensure that the premises are safe.

It is extremely important that committee members (as managing trustees) take the steps necessary to ensure that they do not become liable under the Health and Safety at Work Act or that their insurance is not invalidated through their own negligence. When first read

the following pages might seem daunting but the tasks involved are not difficult. (Nine key action points are given at the foot of Appendix 1). Health and safety is a shared responsibility and it is important that all members of the management committee become involved.

Although some legislation applies only to organisations which have employees and not those which use volunteers only, the duty of care applies to **all** organisations. This information sheet does not attempt to distinguish between volunteers and employees. It is important that all village hall committees take their responsibilities seriously. They also have the full responsibilities of an employer to part-time staff such as cleaners and caretakers. Moreover hall users, such as playgroups, may have employees and they will have an obligation to provide a safe place of work.

No one can guarantee total protection against accidents however. Assessed risks and the measures required to reduce or avoid them have to be balanced against the cost and practicality of the relevant safety measures. Sometimes the requirements of different legislative authorities conflict e.g. where planners refuse to allow car park lighting; where fire officers require main doors to be unlocked when a hall is in use but Ofsted require them barred when the playgroup is in. The solution can often be found by getting the enforcers on site at the same time – for example an alarm, or a pencil inserted in hooks on the door may solve the playgroup problem. The important point is to do what is reasonable to solve problems and record your actions.

We recommend village hall committees:

- appoint one (or two) person(s) as their Health and Safety Officer(s) to use this Information Sheet (or information from sources such as the Health and Safety Executive) to draw up the appropriate records, advice and notices for their own hall and oversee implementation of a health and safety policy
- carry out a risk assessment at least every two years
- prepare a health & safety file, which is kept at the hall in a ring binder in case of query
- provide a copy of the information in the health and safety file for their hall to every committee member
- ask the health and safety person(s) to go through the file at a village hall management committee meeting and encourage members to pass on the information to user groups
- ensure that the booking secretary makes all hirers aware of the health and safety policy for the hall and the fire evacuation procedures
- ensure that all hirers sign a written hiring agreement agreeing to abide by the terms and conditions given (A model is available, see Appendix 7).

Initially, there is a certain amount of work involved in setting up the documentation and procedures. However, this then becomes part and parcel of the ordinary management activities of the hall and be subject to review at a management committee meeting once a year (e.g. the first meeting after the AGM).

3. Health and safety legislation and implications for village halls

This section covers in brief the legislation most relevant to village halls, with examples of how it might apply. This can seem daunting but much of it can be complied with through risk assessment and good housekeeping. A checklist is provided in Appendix 1, to help you identify what to do about each item of legislation. At the end of the checklist is a summary of the nine key action points required by legislation.

3.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974

This fundamental legislation requires that village hall committees, as the managers of premises, ensure the health and safety of employees and others who use the hall i.e. volunteers, members of the public and contractors. It encompasses every aspect of the premises and equipment provided, including paths, surfaces, chairs, escape routes etc.

Every employer must either display a HSE poster (0717624935) or distribute a leaflet (0717617025) to employees setting out information on health & safety law. These are available from HSE books (see Appendix 7 for details). The poster provides two blank spaces in which the address of the enforcing authority (usually the District Council Environmental Health Department or, for local authority run halls, the Health & Safety Executive) and the local Employment Medical Advisory Service, must be given.

3.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

These require that health and safety legislation is implemented at all places of work. Employers have a duty to assess the potential risks to employees and others who could be affected. If risks are identified, employers are required to take appropriate action to minimise or eliminate them. Employees are also obliged to work to procedures specified, co-operate with training and instructions given by the employer and to inform the employer of any hazards in the workplace. Employers must:

- provide a safe place of work
- identify and assess all risks of hazards associated with the premises or activities held there which may have an effect on the health and safety of their employees and others
- carry out risk assessments using persons who are competent (see section 6 below)
- take action to eliminate or reduce hazards
- record the arrangements made (if five or more persons are employed)
- review arrangements as and when changes occur
- co-operate with other employers (e.g. hirers) if their employees share the same risk
- provide training and information about health and safety
- provide appropriate supervision to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of employees.

3.3 The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

These are aimed at protecting employees' health from injury or long-term illness, providing for their safety and for their welfare by providing for personal comfort at work. For example:

- adequate ventilation
- a reasonable temperature, at least 16° C
- suitable lighting and seating (for seated work)
- safe, clean premises with no tripping hazards (e.g. worn mats, leads)
- suitably maintained equipment and machinery
- no undue reaching, bending or stretching when using equipment or machinery (such as moving furniture)
- the fencing-off of openings from which people are likely to fall
- safe storage for all materials and goods

- safety glass in windows where appropriate
- control of vehicles where pedestrians are at risk, such as traffic calming measures
- sufficient toilets and washing facilities with hot and cold water, soap and towels
- accessible drinking water and suitable facilities for rest and eating.

3.4 The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1988

All work equipment must be suitable for its purpose and used only for that purpose, be maintained adequately and, where appropriate, be restricted only to the individuals given the task of using it (e.g. mechanical floor polishers). The key point is that the risk of using any equipment should be assessed and measures taken to protect against potential hazards. Training should be provided for those using and maintaining equipment.

3.5 The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

These require a risk assessment to be carried out in all cases where employees have to carry, lift, push or pull items as part of their employment (e.g. village hall caretakers setting out furniture). Employers should avoid any manual handling operations which involve the risk of injury. If an operation cannot be avoided, take steps to reduce the risk of injury: give information about the object to be moved (e.g. weight) and provide a safe system of work. Employees must make full use of the guidelines provided as a result of the assessment (e.g. if told to use a trolley, or given a limit for chairs to be carried in a stack). Points that village hall committees should note in their risk assessment are:

- employees should be told not to lift loads which are too heavy, too bulky/unwieldy, too difficult to get hold of, too hot or hazardous
- decide whether it is possible to avoid some handling through use of trolleys
- ensure that employees (and volunteers) are given advice and consider the needs of people with health problems or women who are pregnant
- assess whether the job involves movements that increase the chance of injury when carrying or lifting (e.g. twisting, too much pushing or pulling, bending, reaching upwards)
- the area where the job is to be done should be free from risk with sufficient space to work in (e.g. store rooms should not be stacked so that chairs might topple when others are removed).

3.6 The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992

Adequate protective equipment (e.g. eye protection for use of sanding equipment) and clothing must be provided where risks to safety and health cannot be controlled by other means (which should be eliminated if possible). Any protective equipment supplied must be replaced if it deteriorates and the user should be given instruction about its use. Employees must use it and report any faults.

3.7 The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH) Regulations 1994

These require employers to assess the risks to health from substances used at the workplace and to take steps to control any risk identified. The label on the product container or wrapping should show one of the following signs to indicate the main hazards:



Suppliers of substances must supply hazard data sheets where requested, which list safety precautions to be taken when using their products. Many substances can be potentially dangerous in certain circumstances (e.g. household bleach mixed with other household cleaners can give off a poisonous gas which is extremely dangerous in confined spaces such as toilets.) Some substances, such as solvent paints, may not cause immediate harm but lead to serious disease later in life. Hazardous substances may be gases, solid or powders (e.g. calor gas).

Most substances used at village halls may not be very hazardous (e.g. mild cleaning agents) and it may be sufficient to ensure that anyone using them is aware of any potential hazards, how to deal with spillages and how to store the substances. From time to time, however, employees and volunteers may use more hazardous substances for maintenance work (e.g. paint strippers) and a more detailed assessment should be carried out for these, using the expertise of people doing the work, information from suppliers and the Health & Safety Executive if necessary.

The CoSHH assessment should follow the same steps as a risk assessment (see Section 6). See Appendix 7 for a free on-line CoSHH risk assessment service.

3.8 The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

Employers, the self-employed and those in control of work premises (which includes halls used by playgroups, etc) are required under RIDDOR to report some work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences. See Section 8 for further information.

3.9 The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

These require that all electrical systems and equipment are installed and maintained in a safe condition. Installations and equipment should be professionally checked on a regular basis (at least every five years) although installations do not have to be installed and maintained by a business which is NICEIC¹ approved. Routine checks should be carried out as appropriate to the nature of the premise and its use. (It may be appropriate that these are carried out more frequently than once a year). These routine checks need not be carried out by an electrically skilled person but should be conducted by someone who is able to safely use the installation and recognise the defects.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) involves a combination of visual checks and using test apparatus. Although not compulsory it is recommended as a means of ensuring that both the Electricity at Work Regulations and the Health and Safety at Work Act are complied with. All appliances that have been tested should display either a pass or fail label.

¹ National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Consulting

Appliances that fail must not be used until repaired and re-tested. Village hall committees should carry out visual checks as part of their routine health and safety checks, at least annually, and have repaired any appliances (including extension leads, fridges etc.) which have damage to insulation on leads or to plugs, loose plugs, or incorrect fuses. Any portable equipment brought onto the premises by users should be PAT tested. (Certain types of tests can damage computers and other office equipment and the correct test equipment needs to be used.) Users should be encouraged to report any faults or damage to electrical equipment and items reported should be taken out of use (e.g. marked as faulty or the plug removed) until repaired.

See HSE Guidance for further information about these regulations. Details are in Appendix 7.

3.10 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to England and Wales and came into effect on 1 October 2006. It reforms current fire safety law and covers general fire precautions and other fire safety duties in non-domestic property. The Order repeals the Fire Precautions Act, under which fire certificates were issued.

The Order requires:

- the appointment of a 'responsible person (s)'
- a fire safety 'risk assessment' and
- requires fire precautions to be put in place where necessary and where it is reasonable and practical to do so.

The Fire and Rescue Authority will be responsible for enforcing the Order and will inspect premises and undertake audits of fire risk assessments. However they will target their resources at premises that are deemed to be high risk (such as night clubs) and not those that are well managed and have adequate prevention measures in place and which are considered to be low risk.

The main emphasis under the new order will be towards reducing the risk of fire and preventing fire. Village Hall management committees will also have a responsibility to ensure employees and hirers are aware of the fire safety regulations and that they are fully instructed with regard to fire procedures and the use of equipment.

Hazards that could be present in village halls include:

- flammable liquids (e.g. cleaning fluids, petrol) and gases (e.g. calor gas, aerosols)
- electrical equipment producing heat (e.g. heaters, grills)
- damage to electrical flexes or plugs
- overloading of electrical sockets
- storage of combustible materials near sources of ignition (such as a boiler or cooker)
- smoking and matches (many halls now have 'No Smoking' policies)
- emergency heating and lighting (eg portable gas fires, candles).

Key points to note include:

- The findings of the risk assessment must be recorded, including the measures to be taken to address identified risks, and any group of people identified as being especially at risk. (Exceptions are where there is no licence in force and employees number less than five).

- Preventative and protection measures must be taken in accordance with principles set out in the Order, having regard for the size and nature of use of the premises (see Section 6).
- Inflammable substances must either be replaced with safer alternatives or, where this is not possible, measures applied to control the risk.
- Fire fighting and detection equipment appropriate to the premises must be provided.
- Emergency exits and routes to them must be kept clear at all times.
- Fire equipment must be maintained in efficient working order and good repair.
- Employees, including those working for other organisations using the premises, must be provided with information about the risks identified and preventative and protective measures taken. Employees must also be given adequate safety training when first employed or when risks change and inform their employers about any shortcomings in safety arrangements.

3.11 The Licensing Act 2003

The Licensing Act 2003 requires most village halls to obtain a Premises Licence. The Act has four licensing objectives:

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public safety
- The prevention of public nuisance
- The protection of children from harm.

Applicants for a Premises Licence are required to submit an operating schedule explaining how the licensing objectives will be met. Risk assessments and the provision of a health and safety policy may be expected as part of this. Fire safety and hygiene conditions will be attached to licences. Premises classed as low risk will not have annual inspections by fire officers and environmental health officers. This places the onus on management committees to ensure that fire precautions, electrical installations and hygiene standards are well maintained. It is important to have a system for ensuring that electrical installations are checked every 3 – 5 years (requirements vary) by a qualified electrician, as this may not be a condition of the Premises Licence and could become overlooked. For further information about the Licensing Act 2003 see **ACRE Village Hall Information Sheet 9, The village hall and its premises licence.**

3.12 The Occupiers Liability Act 1984

Under this Act a management committee owes a duty of care to users, even if they are trespassers. This duty of care applies to uninvited persons and persons exercising a private right of way over property if:

- it is aware of a danger or has reasonable grounds to believe it exists
- it knows, or has reasonable grounds to believe, that the trespasser is in the vicinity of the danger concerned or that the trespasser may come into the vicinity of the danger; and
- the risk from the danger is one from which, in all the circumstances, he may be expected to offer the trespasser some protection.

This is particularly relevant to car parks. For example if the car park is full of pot holes, youths using the car park for skate boarding or elderly people walking a dog will be at increased the risk of injury. The management committee should do a risk analysis (see Section 6). They should give warning of any danger concerned by installing a fixed notice

i.e. discouraging people from taking the risk. It is essential, however, that the management committee understands that doing this does not absolve them of responsibility: it merely assists in any defence against any action for damages. Any particular hazards, such as deep holes, should be fenced off until dealt with. The duty is to take reasonable care to see that the trespasser does not suffer injury on the premises by reason of the danger concerned. Lack of funds is not a valid reason for not taking reasonable steps.

3.13 The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002

Anyone carrying out construction and maintenance work may come across material containing asbestos (e.g. stripping out old insulation, ceiling tiles, asbestos cement sheets.) Village hall committees have to take reasonable steps to locate asbestos in the premises, assess its condition and manage the risk. If it is in good condition and is not likely to be disturbed or damaged it may be safer to leave it in place and manage it. If it is in poor condition or likely to be disturbed the committee will have to decide what should be done with it. There are three types of asbestos – blue, brown and white – of which blue and brown are the more dangerous. However, they can discolour with age so it is not always easy to distinguish them. The HSE publication 'Managing Asbestos in Premises' provides useful information about identification. See **ACRE Village Halls Information Sheet 14, Asbestos** for further information.

3.14 The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

Special provisions apply to the use of Visual Display Units (VDUs) and for employees who use desktop computer monitors as a significant part of their work. (See Chapter 5 of the Health and Safety Handbook, details in Appendix 7).

3.15 The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006

This is a wide ranging set of regulations and affects everyone working in food businesses, however large or small. Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004 on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs and Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 on General Food Law are the main pieces of legislation with which village halls have to comply. Both regulations are European Community Regulations and are directly applicable in the United Kingdom.

The regulations apply to any establishment where food or drink is prepared, stored, sold or supplied, whether or not for profit, including village halls and community buildings. They lay down minimum legal standards which local authority environmental health officers have a duty to enforce. The regulations aim to ensure that all food sold is safe for human consumption and free from contamination or adulteration. They introduce the requirement on **all** food businesses to put in place management procedures to control food safety. **Village Halls Information Sheet 20, Health and hygiene in village halls**, provides further information and suggests a range of standards appropriate for different circumstances.

3.16 The Children Act 1989

The purpose of this Act is to promote and safeguard the welfare of children. Organisers of care provision for children which last for more than two hours have to register with local authority social service departments and are subject to inspection by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Registration and inspection revolves around the suitability of the premises, as well as the organisers, and health, hygiene and safety issues are of paramount importance. As with obtaining a Premises Licence, these inspections should be seen as a useful means of identifying points that need attention to ensure that premises are safe. They may require, for example, provision of safety glass or protective material where glass is up to 800mm (2ft 8ins) from floor level. Where

improvements are needed to meet Ofsted standards the hall committee or hirer may be able to access funding possibly through the Local Network Fund. Further information is given in **ACRE Village Halls Information Sheet 5, Village halls, children and young people.**

3.17 The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999

All plumbing systems, water fittings and equipment supplied or to be supplied, from the public water supply in England and Wales must conform to the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. Owners and occupiers of premises and anyone who installs plumbing systems or water fittings must ensure that the systems and appliances satisfy these regulations. They must be designed, installed and maintained to meet the regulations' requirements and plumbing materials must conform to a suitable standard. Application of the regulations is not back-dated. Any plumbing system or water fitting which was installed lawfully before the regulations came into force can still be used, even if it would be illegal to install it now.

The Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) is funded by all the UK water suppliers to provide an advisory service for water regulations. Approval by WRAS is a method by which compliance with the regulations can be guaranteed and most appliances sold in the UK will have WRAS approval. However, it is a voluntary scheme; water fittings and appliances do not have to be approved by WRAS, only comply with the regulations.

If village hall management committees intend to do their own installation they must ensure that they meet the requirements. If they are employing someone else, using an approved plumber will guarantee compliance of the new installation. An approved plumber will provide a certificate to state that his or her installation and maintenance work satisfies the regulations. If breaches of regulations are found in the certified work, the legal responsibility falls upon the approved plumber and not on the village hall.

'The Water Fittings and Materials Directory' published by WRAS gives up-to-date details of a wide range of items which have been tested and proved to comply with the regulations. This directory and the 'Water Regulations Guide' are available on request from WRAS. See Appendix 7 for further information.

4. Preparing a health and safety file

The committee should have a health and safety file in which all the key documents relating to health and safety matters are kept, along with the Accident Book. This file should be provided to all contractors working on site (e.g. electricians, window cleaners, builders, people laying car parks etc.) as well as employees and volunteers. (This is particularly important where contractors might, for example, hit electricity cables etc.). Key documents include:

- a copy of the hall's health and safety policy
- risk assessment surveys and records
- a copy of the fire evacuation procedure
- electrical and gas safety certificates
- reporting of accidents, disease and dangerous occurrences regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) forms
- a copy of a plan of the building (if available) or drawings showing the location of services such as electrical cables, gas mains, water pipes, overhead power lines and drains within the boundary of the property as well as within the building itself

- an up to date list of contacts from which expert advice and guidance can be obtained:
 - Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (See Appendix 7 for contact details)
 - Environmental health officer at the district council
 - Fire Brigade
 - Citizens Advice Bureau
 - The village halls adviser at the Rural Community Council (See Appendix 7 for contact details).

5. Preparing a health and safety policy

Although it is only a legal requirement for employers with more than five employees we strongly recommend every hall draws up a health and safety policy in writing. It helps the hall management committee to clarify procedures and areas of responsibility, and it should help to make people more aware of health and safety issues. The health and safety policy could form part of an application to the local authority for a premises licence under the operating schedule.

A health and safety policy document normally falls into three parts:

- **General Statement of Policy** - states the hall's commitment, in writing, to tackling health and safety issues. It should be signed and dated.
- **Responsibility for carrying out the Statement of Policy** - this sets out the person (s) who have specific areas of responsibility e.g. identifies who is in charge of fire procedures, first aid box, risk assessment etc.
- **Arrangements and Procedures** - this sets out the systems and arrangements that have been put in place to comply with your statement of intent and which form part of the policy e.g. accident reporting, copies of risk assessments, together with any other procedures that have been drawn up.

As part of the hall's health and safety policy volunteers, employees and contractors should not carry out maintenance and repair work alone on the property, particularly if they are using ladders, chemicals or equipment which might pose a danger. Where jobs are less risky and working alone is unavoidable someone should call regularly to check they are safe. A mobile phone and the telephone number for someone who is available to administer first aid should also be available.

A key part of the health and safety policy is gaining commitment from committee members, employees and hirers to watch out for any damage, faults, wear and tear or other circumstances which could pose a hazard to anyone using the hall. There should be a designated committee person to whom such occurrences are notified.

A sample health and safety policy is given at Appendix 2. The Health and Safety Handbook for Voluntary and Community Organisations also has a useful pro-forma for a health and safety policy.

There is no reason why village hall committees should not allow supervised cookery by children and allow older children to help with serving food at charitable functions. Playgroups, brownies, cubs, schools and after school clubs all include basic cookery skills in their curriculum and learning about healthy eating is a vital part of children's education. Helping at charitable functions promotes lifelong understanding of and involvement in community activities. However, there are risks which need to be addressed through the hall's health and safety policy and risk assessment. For example, small children should not be in a kitchen when caterers or volunteers are busy serving hot food or drink. Sharp knives, scalds from kettles or boilers and burns from contact with cookers are obvious

hazards and it is important that all those working with children are aware of these and exercise careful supervision. It is also important to avoid over-crowding and running in the kitchen. These points may need addressing in the hall's hiring agreement. Further information about risk assessment of facilities/activities for children is given in a position statement by the Play Safety Forum 'Managing Risk in Play Provision', which addresses the balance to be struck between safety and allowing children to venture into new experiences. See Appendix 7 for further information.

6. Risk Assessment

The HSE booklet "Five Steps to Risk Assessment" is an excellent basic guide to the process of Risk Assessment and should be obtained (see Appendix 7). In explaining the five steps below the scoring system recommended by Aon, brokers to the Allianz/Cornhill Village Hall Insurance Policy, has been used as this is a helpful means of prioritising action to tackle risks.

Sample Risk Assessment forms are given in Appendix B. (These can be photocopied and one used for each area of the building). In compiling the risk assessment, do not hesitate to ask for information or advice from organisations such as suppliers or the HSE Information Line Tel: 0845 345 0055.

6.1 Why carry out a risk assessment?

Your committee cannot afford to neglect risk assessment. A risk assessment not only helps to keep people safe, it is required under several pieces of legislation. Risk assessment:

- is a means of helping management committees ensure buildings comply with Health and Safety legislation
- offers protection to committees from liability in case of fire or accident
- will be welcomed by insurers
- may be required in order to obtain a Premises Licence
- avoids public liability claims by users, thereby protecting insurance premiums.

If your hall committee organises a major event you should do a risk assessment for each occasion, as different risks may be involved.

6.2 What is a risk assessment?

This is explained by the HSE as, 'nothing more than a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.'

6.3 Who can carry out a risk assessment?

It is not a difficult procedure and can be done by village hall committees themselves. It is a good idea to involve the newest members of the committee, (as they have fresh eyes), and carry it out in small group(s) of both sexes. A mixed group is more likely to spot different hazards. Employees should also be involved as they have a closer knowledge of working practices.

6.4 How do we carry out a risk assessment?

It involves walking round the whole premises (car park, garden, immediate surrounds, entrance, main hall, meeting rooms, kitchen, toilets, stage, walk in store cupboards, boiler

room etc.) checking for hazards and applying common sense. See Appendix 3 for a list of common items to look out for. In each location there are three questions to ask:

- What could go wrong?
- What would be the consequences and for who?
- What could be done to make sure it doesn't go wrong?

Clearly you will never eliminate risk, but should be aiming for the lowest level of risk. The HSE advise: "The important things you need to decide are whether a *hazard is significant* and whether you have it covered by satisfactory precautions so that *the risk is small*".

6.5 What is a hazard?

The HSE define a hazard as "anything that can cause harm". It can include chemicals, electricity (fixed installation or portable appliances), processes (such as working from ladders), things left in the wrong place (e.g. in poorly lit corridors) and faulty equipment (e.g. damaged chairs, fire equipment not working).

6.6 What is risk?

The HSE define a risk as "the chance, high or low, that somebody will be harmed by the hazard".

6.7 The five steps to risk assessment

Step One – Look for the hazards

Walk around and look afresh for the hazards. Ignore the trivial; concentrate on those, which could result in serious harm or affect several people.

Assess the probable frequency of the hazard occurring and score from 1 (low) to 6 (high)

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1. Improbable | 4. Frequent |
| 2. Possible | 5. Regular |
| 3. Occasional | 6. Common |

Step Two – Decide who might be harmed and how

Don't forget that children can be harmed in different ways to adults: for example a toddler cannot read a notice saying 'No children in the kitchen except under close supervision', or may pull on a dangling lead, resulting in serious burns from a boiling kettle (All kettles should have coiled leads and be kept at the back of work surfaces; 'Burco' type boilers should be restrained with safety guards or chains). Disabled people, elderly or the infirm may also be at risk of harm: a broom left in a corridor or a worn recessed mat in an entrance hall may be a tripping hazard, dripping umbrellas may cause a slip. Think about the activities and processes which take place in the hall for example, a volunteer checking gutters could fall from a ladder if no-one is holding it.

Assess the severity of possible injury and score from 1 (low) to 6 (high)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Trivial injuries | 4. Major – many people |
| 2. Minor injuries | 5. Death of one person |
| 3. Major – one person | 6. Multiple deaths |

Step Three – Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or if more should be done

For each hazard you need to calculate the risk rating by adding together the two scores from steps one and two. **A risk rating of 5 or more requires action.**

Example:

Cleaning high level windows using ladder

(Step one) Frequency: 2 (Possible)

(Step two) Severity: 3 (Major Injury to one person)

Risk Rating 5 therefore action needed

Draw up an action list of things that need to be done. Give priority to the highest risk and/or those that could affect most people. In taking action ask yourself: Can I get rid of the hazard altogether? If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely? In taking action the principles below **must** be applied in the following order:

1. Try a less risky option e.g. remove flammable material from the boiler room; repair broken windows or damaged equipment; engage contractors for high level work such as cleaning windows
2. Prevent access to the hazard e.g. lock away cleaning materials, paint etc.
3. Organise to reduce exposure to the hazard e.g. ensure two people are on site when high level work is undertaken, one to hold the ladder and deal with an emergency; put white paint along the stage edge; guard the water boiler
4. Issue personal protective equipment e.g. safety glasses, gloves
5. Provide welfare facilities make a first aid kit available

Step Four – Record your findings

This important step is compulsory if you have five employees or more working on the premises. Record everything as you carry out the checks. Include checks that have been found satisfactory as well as points needing action (e.g. electrical installations: insulation and earthing checked and found sound). See Appendix 3 for a sample report which can be photocopied.

HSE guidance is that risk assessments must be “suitable and sufficient – not perfect!” You need to be able to show that:

- a proper check was made
- you asked who might be affected (e.g. the caretaker, cleaner, volunteers, the public, children, elderly or disabled people)
- you dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved
- the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low

Keep the records. Insurers will ask for the risk assessment to defend any claim for public liability and a claimant’s solicitor is also likely to ask for it. It may also remind you to keep an eye on particular hazards. CoSHH and asbestos risk assessments must be kept for 40 years.

Report the results to the management committee.

Step Five – Review your assessment regularly and revise it if necessary

- if there has been an accident or “near miss”

- if circumstances change (e.g. building work)
- every two years if not done for the reasons above

Some common problems to address at village halls:

- roofs easy to climb on – committees have duty of care to trespassers (see Section 3.12)
- lack of restraint for boilers, which need strapping so they cannot fall
- cleaning materials, mops, brooms, tools etc. should be locked away when not in use
- provide warning signs in key places e.g. ‘no children in the kitchen except for supervised food preparation’, ‘do not stack chairs more than 5 high in store room’
- stage sides and steps should be clearly marked with white tape or paint and moveable stage steps secured by bolts or hooks
- combustible materials stored in boiler rooms
- check for signs of asbestos and if present set up system for monitoring its condition.

6.8 Risk assessment for fire hazards

Village hall management committees will be required to carry out a fire risk assessment and take steps to reduce or remove the risk of fire. The main emphasis of the assessment should be towards fire prevention and the effect a fire might have on anyone in or around the premises. The Risk Assessment needs to cover the fire risks so that suitable precautions can be taken. A sample checklist is given in Appendix 3. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order sets out eight principles, which must be followed in taking preventative and protective, follow up measures of which the following are applicable to village halls:

- avoiding risks
- evaluating the risks which cannot be avoided
- replacing the dangerous by the non-dangerous or less dangerous (e.g. portable gas heaters)
- developing a coherent overall prevention policy
- giving collective protective measures priority over individual protective measures
- giving appropriate instructions to employers and hirers.

There is a recommended method of carrying out a fire risk assessment and putting in place fire safety management procedure and arrangements. These are set out in the Government’s Guide No. 6, ‘Fire safety risk assessment for small and medium places of assembly’ (see Appendix 7). There is no obligation to follow their recommendations but the hall must meet equivalent standards of fire safety. **Village Hall Information Sheet 37, Fire Safety in Village Halls** outlines the responsibilities of village halls management committees under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order and explains the basics of fire risk assessment. Expert advice and guidance can also be sought from local fire authorities in case of any uncertainty.

6.9 Risk assessment & Legionnaires’ disease

Legionnaires’ disease is a potentially fatal pneumonia caused by legionella bacteria. Everyone is potentially susceptible to the infection but some people are at higher risk e.g. those over 45 years of age, those suffering from chronic respiratory disease, smokers and heavy drinkers. Legionella tends to be associated with larger water systems (e.g. hotels, hospitals and cooling towers) but can live in smaller water supply systems.

Under Health & Safety Legislation village hall management committees will have to consider the risks from legionella that may affect staff or members of the public and take suitable precautions. The risk assessment need not be over complicated or involved. A starting point would be to identify and record the water systems that are present in the hall and their condition.

Many village halls have instant water heaters for hot water for washing up, hand washing or showers (e.g. electric showers). These heat water at the point of use i.e. as and when required and would be classified as very low risk.

Regular throughput of water in the cold water systems of many village halls will also reduce the risk. However, some village halls may have hot water cylinders and distribution pipework which will need to be considered against factors known to increase the risk such as:

- water temperature suited to the multiplication of legionella i.e. between 20-45°
- water droplets are produced and dispersed over a wide area (e.g. showers)
- the presence of sludge, scale, rust, algae, & organic matter
- cisterns and tanks that are not properly covered and allow dirt, debris or vermin to contaminate the water
- water system components that do not comply with water authority bye-laws and may support bacterial growth (e.g. some plastics, rubber or sealing components)
- infrequently used outlets such as showers or taps that are seldom used
- particularly susceptible people coming into contact with the contaminated water droplets.

The key elements which are needed to minimise risk are as follows:

- a well designed water system which is well maintained
- check cisterns are well covered and vermin proof and periodically inspect, clean and disinfect
- keep water temperature safely outside the range 20-45°C
- store hot water at 60°C and circulate it at 50°C
- ensure water cannot stagnate, e.g. remove redundant pipework
- insulate cold water tanks and pipework to keep cool in warm places (eg roof spaces)
- check clean and periodically descale and disinfect shower heads
- check water system fittings comply with regulations. (This could be done by a good plumber)
- advise staff on how to minimise the risks.

Note that if the risk is found to be low the water systems should nonetheless be checked periodically. Further information and advice can be found and downloaded from the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk. See Appendix 7 for contact details.

7. First Aid

7.1 What do village hall committees have to provide?

Village hall committees have a duty (as employers and to the general public) to assess what first aid facilities and equipment would be appropriate, and to provide appropriate first aid equipment and facilities.

There is no definitive list of requirements, because provision should be based on the assessment. However, the fact that the public (including children) uses the premises for a variety of purposes should indicate that the risk of someone needing first aid is higher than would be the case for, say, a small office.

7.2 The First Aid box

Providing that there are no special risks the stock of first aid items given below (which is recommended for 10 people) should be provided as a minimum. Someone should be appointed to keep this stocked.

- a leaflet giving guidance on first aid
- 20 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes). These must include waterproof dressings or blue plasters for use where food is prepared
- 2 sterile eye pads
- 6 individually wrapped triangular bandages (preferably sterile)
- 6 safety pins
- 6 medium-sized individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings – approximately 12cm x 12cm
- 2 large sterile individually wrapped un-medicated wound dressings – approx. 18cm x 18 cm.
- 3 extra large size sterile un-medicated dressings
- 1 pair of disposable gloves.

The box should preferably be marked with a white cross on a green background. Ready-made boxed, first aid kits can be purchased to meet the requirements of employment legislation. A suitable location might be on the wall or in a drawer in the kitchen, where there is access to clean running water and all users can be expected to have access at any time. There must be a notice in the entrance lobby giving the location of the first aid box and this should also give the location of the nearest telephone.

Some village halls have experienced abuse of the provision of a first aid box by hall users 'helping themselves', but this is not a reason for failing to provide one which is properly stocked and available. It would be preferable to put a notice on the box reminding users that it is for emergency use only, that theft could cause serious harm and asking them to report to the booking secretary/caretaker if they have used items so that it can be re-stocked.

See Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Guidance notes 'Basic Advice on First Aid at Work' for further information. Full contact details are listed in Appendix 7.

7.3 Providing Appointed People/First Aiders

Many village halls employ only a part time cleaner, who usually works alone, and cannot provide either a trained first aider or an appointed person to be on the premises when the hall is used. However, it would be sensible for those that do have a resident caretaker or an office which is in regular use (e.g. by the Parish Clerk) to arrange for these people to become either an appointed person or first aider, in which case they should be identified as such on the notice giving the location of the first aid box.

An appointed person is someone who has basic first aid knowledge, can take charge in an emergency i.e. they are responsible for calling the emergency services. One-day courses are available to train appointed persons. A first aider is someone who has completed a HSE approved first aid course of at least 24 hours (usually over four days),

and has received re-training in the last three years. The HSE or local branches of the St. John's Ambulance Service should be able to provide information about such courses.

Ideally all the organisations using the hall regularly should be encouraged to provide an appointed person (children's organisations may need first aiders, to comply with registration requirements). For major public events, such as a fete, car boot sale or fireworks display, the organisers should provide a first aider or arrange for the St. John's Ambulance service to attend.

As part of the hall's Health and Safety Policy volunteers, employees and contractors should not carry out maintenance and repair work alone. A telephone and the telephone number for someone who can administer first aid should be available.

8. Recording accidents/incidents

8.1 The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

Employers, the self-employed and those in control of work premises (which includes halls used by playgroups, keep fit classes, doctor's surgeries etc.) are required under RIDDOR to report some work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences.. The following MUST be reported:

- a death or major injury
- an injury which results in someone being unable to work for more than three days
- a work-related disease
- a dangerous occurrence
- any injury which results in a member of the public being taken to hospital.

Hirers and employees should be asked to report any accidents to a designated member of the management committee.

8.2 Reporting accidents/incidents

Incidents should be reported to the Incident Contact Centre (ICC), based in Caerphilly, Wales. Incidents should be reported by the quickest way and the forms then returned (by post, internet or fax) within 10 days. Incidents can be reported in a variety of ways:

- By phone: Mondays to Fridays, 8.30 am to 5.00 pm. Tel: 0845 300 9923
- By fax: 0845 300 9924
- By the website: www.riddor.gov.uk or via the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk
- By email: riddor@natbrit.com
- By post: Incident Contact Centre, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly, CF83 3GG

8.3 Recording accidents/incidents

All accidents and incidents should be recorded, whether or not there are employees on the premises, because by investigating these, action may be identified to prevent further accidents. Even those halls which are not used by any employees are required to inform their insurers of any accident or incident and should therefore keep records, which may be useful in the event of any claim.

8.4 Accident books

An HSE-approved accident book is needed for all workplaces with more than 10 employees (and is required by children's organisations such as playgroups.) This is available from www.hsebooks.co.uk. For other premises, an accident book or form for recording minor incidents should be included in the hall's Health and Safety folder where it is accessible to employees and hirers. Accident records must be kept for eight years.

Under Data Protection requirements accident books should not enable people to read personal information from previous accident records. So, as from 1 January 2004, accident books should consist of single record sheets, which can be detached from the book once completed and kept in a secure place. Record sheets should be numbered in sequence and the accident book should include an index sheet showing which numbered sheets have been completed and removed for safekeeping. In this way the village hall committee will be able to show a record (in the index) of how many accidents have occurred and in what order, which they can link up with the completed accident record sheets which they are holding separately for safe keeping.

8.5 Investigation

The cause of all accidents must be investigated by the committee so that measures can be taken to reduce the risk of recurrence, as appropriate. This means that all accidents should be reported to the committee.

9. Hiring Procedures

9.1 Hiring Agreements

Every hire of the premises should be covered by a written hiring agreement. This should make clear the health and safety policies which hirers are obliged to follow (e.g. keeping fire exits clear, informing the booking secretary of any damage or breakages etc.) and give the location of the health and safety folder and first aid box. A **Model Hiring Agreement is available from ACRE.**

9.2 The role of the Booking Secretary

The booking secretary plays an important role in implementing the health and safety policy. For first-time hirers the provision of a written hiring agreement alone is not enough: the booking secretary should draw the hirer's attention to the following points:

- the health and safety requirements in the hiring agreement and the health and safety policy and file
- the location of the: first aid box, safety notices, fire exits, fire fighting equipment
- the evacuation procedure
- if they are using particular facilities, such as the stage, attention should be drawn to any particular requirements (such as the need for portable amplification equipment to be PAT tested)
- the need to report any faults or damage and to whom.

9.3 Notices

A profusion of notices beginning 'Do Not...' often become ignored! It is preferable to tackle health and safety (and other issues) by means of:

- Talking to hirers and politely impressing on them the importance of health and safety. This should be backed up by inclusion in the written hiring agreement.
- Fewer key notices in key places, which are drawn to hirers attention by the booking secretary/caretaker (e.g. location of First Aid Box, Fire Evacuation Procedure, Procedure for Stacking/Moving equipment).
- Providing representatives of user groups on the management committee with a copy of the health and safety policy and asking them to explain this to their members/staff etc.
- Clear labelling and instructions for use of equipment e.g. a notice inside the store cupboard showing how and where chairs should be stacked.

10. Insurance

Village hall committees should ensure that their insurance policy provides adequate cover for public liability, employers' liability and volunteers carrying out work at the building. Insurers should be informed when any major refurbishment or building work is to be carried out by volunteers. For further information see **ACRE Village Halls Information Sheet 7, Insurance Cover.**

Employers liability certificates need to be kept in a secure place for 40 years, for example in a file named 'Do not destroy' and in a metal cupboard at the hall, or with the hall's deeds in a metal box.

Appendix 1: Progress checklist

The numbers below cross reference to the paragraphs in Section 3.

| Legislation | Action needed | Does it apply? | Has it been done? |
|--|--|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 3.1 Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 | Provide safe premises; Provide HSE poster or leaflet with contact addresses to employees. | Yes | |
| 3.2 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regs 1999 | Risk Assessment and follow up. | Where there are employees* | |
| 3.3 Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regs 1991/1992 | Look after employee welfare (heating, sanitation etc.). Provide first aid box. | Where there are employees* | |
| 3.4 Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regs 1988 | Where equipment is used: risk assessment, follow up, training and maintenance. | Where equipment is used* | |
| 3.5 Manual Handling Operations Regs 1992 | Risk Assessment of operations involving moving furniture/equipment and follow up. | Where there are employees* | |
| 3.6 Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 | Provide adequate protective equipment (e.g. gloves, safety glasses) | Where there are employees* | |
| 3.7 The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regs 1994 (CoSHH) | Risk assessment for substances used and follow up. | Where there are employees* | |
| 3.8 Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regs 1995 (RIDDOR) | Provide an Accident Book or forms. Report all serious incidents. | Where there are employees* | |
| 3.9 Electricity at Work Regs 1989 | All electrical systems and equipment to be installed and maintained in safe condition; checks every five years; Portable appliances to be tested annually. | Yes | |
| 3.10 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 | Risk assessment of fire hazards and follow up. Obtain advice from fire authority re provision and maintenance of fire precautions, fire fighting equipment, detection, fire exits. Training. | Yes | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| 3.11 The Licensing Act 2003 | Risk assessments and health & safety policy may be expected as part of operating schedule. | Yes | |
| 3.12 The Occupiers Liability Act 1984 | Ensure any dangers on the premises (including outside) are dealt with by warnings and/or fencing as appropriate. | Yes | |
| 3.13 The Control of Asbestos at Work Regs 2002 | Locate any asbestos, check its condition, manage the risk. See VH Info Sheet 14. | Yes | |
| 3.14 Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regs 1992 | Check Health and Safety Handbook for details. | Where employees use VDUs* | |
| 3.15 The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations | All food provided on the premises must be safe. | Yes | |
| | Food Businesses must be registered in writing to the district (or borough) council. | See VH Info Sheet 20 to check | |
| | Specifies basic food hygiene standards for premises used for food preparation – see VH Info Sheet 20. | Yes if food is prepared or served on the premises | |
| | All food handlers to be supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters commensurate with their work – see VH Info Sheet 20 | Yes if food is regularly prepared on the premises | |
| | Certain foods are subject to temperature control requirements, refrigeration may be required. See VH Info Sheet 20. | Yes, if food is prepared or served on the premises | |
| 3.16 The Children Act 1989 | Organisations providing childcare must register and comply with inspections. | Where child care takes place | |
| 3.17 The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 | All water fittings and equipment must conform to these regs. | Yes unless installed before legislation | |

* Note that although these regulations only apply to premises where people are employed the over-arching Health and Safety at Work Act applies to all premises to which the public and volunteers have access, and some users may have employees so it is prudent for all village halls to operate as if they applied.

Summary of nine key action points:

- Provide HSE poster or leaflets to employees
- Risk Assessments: General
 Fire Hazards
 CoSHH
- Provide first aid box
- Provide accident book/forms
- Provide protective equipment (e.g. gloves, glasses, trolleys)
- Provide training e.g. in equipment use
- Maintain and check electrical and fire equipment
- Locate and manage any asbestos
- Check ACRE Village Hall Information Sheet 20 regarding food safety

Appendix 2: Sample Health and Safety Policy

(A written statement is required where five or more persons are employed and otherwise is recommended as good practice)

Part 1 – General Statement of Policy

This document is the Health and Safety Policy of _____ Village Hall

Our policy is to:

- a) Provide healthy and safe working conditions, equipment and systems of work for our employee(s), volunteers, committee members and hirers
- b) Keep the village hall and equipment in a safe condition for all users
- c) Provide such training and information as is necessary to staff, volunteers and users.

It is the intention of _____ Village Hall Management Committee to comply with all health and safety legislation and to act positively where it can reasonably do so to prevent injury, ill health or any danger arising from its activities and operations.

_____ Village Hall Management Committee considers the promotion of the health and safety of its employees at work and those who use its premises, including contractors who may work there, to be of great importance. The management committee recognises that the effective prevention of accidents depends as much on a committed attitude of mind to safety as on the operation and maintenance of equipment and safe systems of work. To this end, it will seek to encourage employees, committee members and users to engage in the establishment and observance of safe working practices.

Employees, hirers and visitors will be expected to recognise that there is a duty on them to comply with the practices set out by the committee, with all safety requirements set out in the hiring agreement and with safety notices on the premises and to accept responsibility to do everything they can to prevent injury to themselves or others.

Signed: (On behalf of the Management Committee) _____

Name _____

Position _____

Date _____

Part 2: Organisation of Health and Safety

The _____ Village Hall Management Committee has overall responsibility for health and safety at _____ Village Hall.

The person (s) delegated by the management committee to have day to day responsibility for the implementation of this policy is/are:

Name: _____
 Telephone No: _____
 Address: _____

Name: _____
 Telephone No: _____
 Address: _____

It is the duty of all employees, hirers and visitors to take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their activities and to co-operate with the management committee in keeping the premises safe and healthy, including the grounds.

Should anyone using the hall come across a fault, damage or other situation which might cause injury and cannot be rectified immediately they should inform the person above, or the Bookings Secretary, as soon as possible so that the problem can be dealt with. Where equipment is damaged a notice should be placed on it warning that it is not to be used and it should be placed in the _____ .

The following persons have responsibility for specific items:

First Aid box _____
 Reporting of accidents _____
 Fire precautions and checks _____
 Training in use of hazardous substances and equipment _____

Risk assessment and inspections _____
 Information to contractors _____
 Information to hirers _____
 Insurance _____

A plan of the hall is attached showing the location of electricity cables, gas pipes, fire exits, fire extinguishers, fuse box, stop cock, boiler, stairs, loft access and" (add any other features which may have a bearing on safety).

Part 3: Arrangements and Procedures

3.1 Licence

The village hall has a Premises Licence authorising the following regulated entertainment and licensable activities at the times indicated:

| Activity | The hall is licensed for | Times for which the activity is licensed | Indicate activities to take place at your event |
|--|--------------------------|--|---|
| a The performance of plays | | | |
| b The exhibition of films | | | |
| c Indoor sporting events | | | |
| d Boxing or wrestling entertainment | | | |
| e The performance of live music | | | |
| f The playing of recorded music | | | |
| g The performance of dance | | | |
| h Entertainments similar to those in a – g | | | |
| i Making music | | | |
| j Dancing | | | |
| k Entertainment similar to those in i – j | | | |
| l The provision of hot food/drink after 11pm | | | |
| m The sale of alcohol | | | |

3.2 Fire Precautions and Checks

Insert here a copy of the risk assessment including the evacuation procedure, the location of the nearest telephone and a map showing the fire exits, fire fighting equipment, assembly point(s).

Person on the management committee with responsibility for testing for the fire risk assessment: _____

Local Fire Brigade contact name: _____

Fire Brigade contact tel: _____

Company hired to maintain and service fire safety equipment:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No.: _____

Location of service record: _____

List of Equipment and its location. For example:

| Item | Test interval (e.g. weekly/monthly/annual) | Location | Service Date |
|--------------------------|--|----------|--------------|
| Residual Current Device | Monthly | | |
| Emergency Lighting | Monthly | | |
| Fire Exits – main hall | Weekly | | |
| Fire fighting appliances | Annually | | |
| Electrical installation | 1/3/5 years | | |

Procedure in case of accidents

The location of the nearest hospital Accident and Emergency/Casualty dept is:

The location and telephone no. for the nearest doctor's surgery is:

The First Aid Box is located in:

The person responsible for keeping this up to date is:

The accident book/forms are kept with this file. This must be completed whenever an accident occurs.

Any accident must be reported to the member of the management committee responsible, who is:

The person responsible for completing RIDDOR forms and reporting accidents is:

The following major injuries or incidents must be reported on RIDDOR forms:

- fracture, other than to fingers, thumbs or toes
- amputation
- dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine
- loss of sight (temporary or permanent)
- any penetrating injury to the eye (including chemical)
- injury from electric shock/burn leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours;
- any other injury leading to hypothermia, heat – induced illness or unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
- unconsciousness caused by asphyxia or exposure to harmful substance or biological agent
- acute illness requiring medical treatment or loss of consciousness arising from absorption of any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through skin
- acute illness requiring medical attention which may have resulted from a biological agent or its toxins or infected material.

Relevant examples of reportable dangerous occurrences include:

- electrical short circuit or overload causing fire or explosion
- collapse or partial collapse of a scaffold over 5m high
- unintended collapse of a building under construction or alteration, or of a wall or floor
- explosion or fire

Safety Rules

All hirers will be expected to read the whole of the hiring agreement and should sign the hiring form as evidence that they agree to the hiring conditions. All new hirers will also be given information/training by the booking secretary about safety procedures at the hall which they will be expected to follow (e.g. fire evacuation procedures, use of trolleys to move equipment, use of equipment) and will be shown the location of the accident book and health and safety file.

Explain whether you have carried out risk assessments, including those for hazardous substances and fire. List any hazards identified through the risk assessment and any procedures to be adopted in order to minimise risk. These could be printed as a separate sheet on coloured paper which is handed to hirers with the hiring agreement, so as to draw attention to them. For example:

"It is the intention of _____ Village Hall Management Committee to comply with all health and safety legislation and to act positively where it can reasonably do so to prevent injury, ill health or any danger arising from its activities and operations.

Employees, hirers and visitors will be expected to recognise that there is a duty on them to comply with the practices set out by the committee, with all safety requirements set out in the hiring agreement and with safety notices on the premises and to accept responsibility to do everything they can to prevent injury to themselves or others.

The committee has carried out risk assessments. The following practices **must** be followed in order to minimise risks:

- **Make sure that all emergency exit doors are clear and unlocked as soon as the hall is to be used and throughout the hiring**
- **Do not** operate or touch any electrical equipment where there are signs of damage, exposure of components or water penetration etc.
- **Do not** work on steps, ladders or at height until they are properly secured and **another person is present**
- **Do not** leave portable electrical or gas appliances operating while unattended
- **Do not** bring onto the property any portable electrical appliances which have not been Portable Appliance Tested.
- **Do not** attempt to move heavy or bulky items (eg stacked tables or chairs) - use the trolleys provided
- **Do not** stack more than five chairs
- **Do not** attempt to carry or tip a water boiler when it contains hot water. Leave it to cool.
- **Do not** allow children in the kitchen except under close supervision (e.g. for supervised cookery lessons or, in the case of older children, for supervised serving of food at functions). Avoid over-crowding in the kitchen and **do not** allow running.
- **Wear** suitable protective clothing when handling cleaning or other toxic materials
- **Report** any evidence of damage or faults to equipment or the building's facilities to _____
- **Report** every accident in the accident book and to _____ .

- **Be aware and seek to avoid** the following risks:
 - creating slipping hazards on stairs, polished or wet floors – mop spills immediately
 - creating tripping hazards such as buggies, umbrellas, mops and other items left in halls and corridors
 - use adequate lighting to avoid tripping in poorly lit areas
 - risk to individuals while in sole occupancy of the building
 - risks involved in handling kitchen equipment e.g. cooker, water heater and knives
 - creating toppling hazards by piling equipment e.g. in store cupboards.

Contractors

The management committee will check with contractors (including self-employed persons) before they start work that:

- the contract is clear and understood by both the contractors and the committee
- the contractors are competent to carry out the work e.g. have appropriate qualifications, references, experience
- contractors have adequate public liability insurance cover
- contractors have seen the health and safety file and are aware of any hazards which might arise (e.g. electricity cables or gas pipes)
- contractors do not work alone on ladders at height (if necessary a volunteer should be present)
- contractors have their own health and safety policy for their staff
- the contractor knows which member of the committee is responsible for overseeing that their work is as asked and to a satisfactory standard
- any alterations or additions to the electrical installations or equipment must conform to the current regulations of the Institute of Electrical Engineers.

Insurance

Give details of the company providing the hall's Employer's Liability and Public Liability insurance cover:

Name and address of insurer

Telephone no of insurer

Policy No.

Date of Renewal

Any risks excluded or special conditions users should be aware of

Review of Health and Safety Policy

The management committee will review this policy annually. The next review is due in (month)_____ (year)_____

Committee members with responsibility for aspects of health and safety will report to the committee regularly, including any accidents, faults, misuse by hirers or other matters which could affect the health and safety of users or employees.

Address and telephone number of organisations that can give advice on health and safety:

The Health and Safety Executive (see Appendix 7 – The HSE also have regional centres whose contact details can be obtained from their telephone line).

The Fire Authority

The local environmental health department.

Appendix 3: Risk Assessment Record

.....Village Hall

Assessor.....

Area.....

Date.....

Persons at Risk.....

| Hazard | Frequency + Severity = Risk Rating | | |
|--------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | | |

A Risk Rating of 5 or more requires further action

| No. | Present Control Measures | Adequate Y/N | Suggested Improvements |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Further Action and Recommendations

Risk Rating Scores:

Probable Frequency

- 1. Improbable
- 2. Possible
- 3. Occasional
- 4. Frequent
- 5. Regular
- 6. Common

Severity

- 1. Trivial injuries
- 2. Minor injuries
- 3. Major injury to one person
- 4. Major injuries to many people
- 5. Death of one person
- 6. Multiple deaths

Date reported to Management Committee

.....

Review Date.....

Appendix 3: Risk Assessments in village halls – example of hazards (For illustration only – make up your own list for your own hall)

Remember to take account of the risks to the disabled– not only people in wheelchairs but also those with hearing or sight impairment.

| AREA | HAZARDS |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Car Park | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. tripping and falling - inadequate lighting 2. tripping and falling - poor maintenance |
| Exterior – footpaths and steps | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. tripping and falling – inadequate lighting 2. tripping and falling – poor maintenance 3. tripping and falling – no hand rail 4. windows protrude over path 5. access to other hazards e.g. main road, pond 6. window cleaning |
| Entrance Area | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. electric shock from switchgear 2. slipping on wet floor 3. tripping and falling – loose mats 4. tripping and falling - pushchairs 5. cleaning materials |
| Main Hall and Meeting Rooms | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. incorrect moving of heavy items (e.g. chairs/tables) 2. electric shock from portable appliances 3. slipping on wet floor 4. too many people 5. electric sockets (access by children) 6. fire exits, blocked (either inside/outside) 7. fire equipment not working |
| Kitchen | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. hot surfaces (esp. children) 2. sharp implements (esp. children) 3. cleaning materials 4. unsecured hot water boilers (esp. children & infirm users) 5. dangling leads |
| Toilets | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. slipping on wet floor 2. cleaning materials |
| Maintenance | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. falls from ladders 2. working alone 3. electric shock from appliances 4. incorrect moving of heavy items (e.g. furniture) |
| Stores | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. badly stacked equipment 2. people moving heavy items |
| Boiler Room | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. inflammable items stored near combustion source (e.g. paint, wood) |
| Stage | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. removable steps loose 2. stage edges not clearly visible |

Appendix 3: Periodic fire safety checklist

This is not intended to take the place of a fire risk assessment, but should be used as a means of ensuring that safety standards, established after the fire risk assessment, are being maintained. It might be appropriate to run over the list at the time of committee meetings, provided they are held at least once a quarter.

- Has the structural fire resistance been impaired by alterations and repairs?
- Have any alterations or repairs been planned, or carried out, which might affect the fire resistance?
- Have any improvements or decorating been planned, or carried out, that might affect flame spread characteristics of surface linings?
- Have any furniture, curtains or drapes been brought in, or are going to be delivered, that need consideration of their flammability properties?
- Are curtains clear of the ground?
- Are the self-closing mechanisms of fire doors operating and closing the doors properly?
- Are emergency exit push-bar devices functioning correctly?
- Are fire exits and escape routes clearly marked and illuminated?
- Are the lighting, and emergency lighting, systems adequate and functioning correctly?
- Is an approved seating plan on display?
- Is the means of ensuring that the maximum permitted number of people entering the hall is not exceeded, operating?
- Are the gangway limits being adhered to?
- Are the floor coverings and stair nosings in good condition?
- Has the electrical equipment and supply been professionally checked?
- Has the chimney been swept?
- Has the firefighting equipment been serviced?
- Has the detection system and battery been checked?
- Has the sprinkler system been checked?
- Are the smoking rules being adhered to?
- Is stage scenery being checked for flammability?
- Are the areas open to the public, free of combustible stores?
- Is rubbish being kept safely and removed frequently?
- Are the security measures functioning?
- Do all committee members know how to use the firefighting equipment?
- Are there any hazards anticipated or overlooked?

Acknowledgement – *The Fire Protection Association*

Appendix 5: Sample Notices

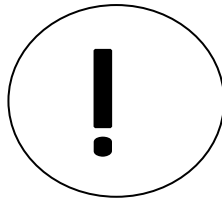
**Please
wash your
hands
after visiting the
toilets**

3395 N

.....
LOCATION OF TELEPHONES

The hall telephone is located in

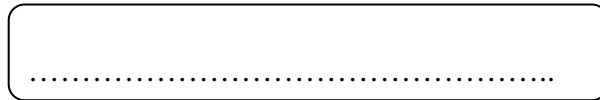
.....
The nearest Public Telephone is located



WARNING

The hall management committee check on a regular basis that this refrigerator complies with The Food Hygiene Regulations 2006 temperature requirements.

However, it is **YOU** the user who is responsible for ensuring that any food is stored at the correct temperature



FIRST AID POINT

The materials contained in this first aid box are supplied in accordance with the Regulations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and EC Food Safety Regulation 852/2004.

Except in very exceptional circumstances, they are only to be used for first aid purposes at this hall and, whenever possible, by a trained first aider.

Details of injuries and first aid equipment used should be recorded in the report book in the first aid box. In addition, all accidents should be reported to the hall management committee.

FIRE

1. In the event of a fire, the person in charge of the hall or function will instruct all persons to leave the building, using the nearest available exits.

2. **CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE.**
The nearest telephone is at
DIAL 999 AND GIVE THIS ADDRESS
.....

3. Attendants should ensure that once the hall has been evacuated, members of the public do not re-enter the building to collect personal belongings, etc.

4. On the arrival of the Fire Brigade, the person in charge of the hall should report to the Officer in Charge that all persons are safe, or should inform him/her of their last known position.

5. Attendants should only attempt to extinguish the outbreak using the fire appliances provided if it is considered safe to do so.

END OF SESSION CHECK LIST

1. Search for smouldering fires or cigarettes left burning, and clear waste paper.
2. Check that heaters and cookers are turned off.
3. Check that all electrical appliances are turned off and unplugged.
4. Turn out all lights not required for security purposes.
5. Close all internal doors.
6. Secure all outside doors and windows.

Appendix 6: Example of a village hall accident form

General details of incident

- Date of incident..... Time of incident.....
- Exact location of incident.....
- Which organisation or individual was in control of the premises at the time of the incident (who was the hirer?).....

Person who had the accident

- Full name.....
- Age..... Sex : **M/F**
- Address.....
- (If applicable) Nature of injury (state left or right as appropriate).....

Status of injured person (tick as appropriate)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee of village hall committee | <input type="checkbox"/> self-employed person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer on village hall business (includes members of village hall management committee) | <input type="checkbox"/> contractor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> employee of another organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> member of general public attending hall function |
| <input type="checkbox"/> individual hirer | <input type="checkbox"/> other (please specify)..... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> member of organisation hiring hall | |

Description of how accident/incident occurred.....

- What was injured person doing at time of incident?.....
 - (If applicable) Was this something they were authorised to do? Yes No
 - (If applicable) Were they authorised to be where the incident occurred? Yes No
 - When was the incident reported?.....date.....time
 - By whom was it reported?.....
 - Was the incident witnessed by someone else? Yes No Details.....
 - Was first aid treatment given on site? Yes No Details.....
 - Was hospital/medical treatment obtained? Yes No Details.....
 - Anticipated absence from work: No time lost Less than 3 days 3 days or more
- Any further details of accident.....
- Action required to prevent recurrence.....

Signed by: Date.....
 Name.....
 Address.....

Appendix 7: Further information

Useful publications

The Health and Safety Executive publishes a wide range of priced and free publications of which the following are a selection:

- Five Steps to Risk Assessment
- Everyone's Guide to RIDDOR (Reporting of Accidents etc.)
- COSHH: new brief guide for employers
- Preventing slips, trips and falls at work
- Five Steps to Successful Health and Safety Management
- Legionnaires' disease (A Guide for employers)
- Accident Book
- Guide to Preparing a Health and Safety Policy for a Small Business
- Essentials of Health and Safety at work
- Health & Safety Regulation...a short guide

Directory of Social Change - The Health and Safety Handbook: For Voluntary and Community Organisations, Second Edition. £12.50 + £2.50 postage. ISBN 1903991013. Website: www.dsc.org.uk

The Play Safety Forum – 'Managing Risk in Play Provision – A Position Statement', from the Children's Play Information Service, National Children's Bureau, 8 Wakley St. London EC1V 7QE. Tel: 020 7843 6303, Website: www.ncb.org.uk/cpc and click resources.

ACRE Village Hall publications – ACRE publishes a range of publications and information sheets for those managing village halls and similar community buildings. These can be obtained from ACRE, or from your local Rural Community Council. The Rural Community Council websites can be accessed by clicking on 'About ACRE' at www.acre.org.uk and following the links.

The following publications are of particular relevance in the context of Health and Safety:

- Managing Your Hall
- Health and Hygiene in Village Halls – ACRE Village Hall Information Sheet 20
- Model Hiring Agreement for Village Halls
- Fire Safety in Village Halls – ACRE Village Hall Information Sheet 37.

Guide No. 6 Fire safety risk assessment in small and medium places of assembly
ISBN 978 185112 82 04 available from your local Health & Safety Office or to order online from www.hse.gov.uk The publication can also be downloaded from the internet at www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk

Useful Contacts

The Health and Safety Executive, Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge, London, SE1 9HS
Telephone Information Line: 0845 345 0055 Website: www.hse.gov.uk
Publications Order Line: 01787 881165.

Health & Safety Executive Bookfinder www.hsebooks.co.uk

COSHH: www.coshh-essentials.org.uk carries out a free on-line risk assessment to give smaller organisations practical solutions to reduce the risks of exposure to dangerous substances.

HSEDIRECT: This is a subscription service provided by the HSE and LexisNexis Butterworths which provides up to date information about legislation and guidance. View information on www.hsedirect.com or telephone: 0845 300 3142.

The Directory of Social Change. 24, Stephenson Way, London NW1 2DP, Tel: 020 7209 5151 Fax: 020 7391 4808 Email: info@dsc.org.uk

Safetyshop

Free catalogue of safety management products, notices, etc. Freephone: 0800 13 23 23
Freefax: 0800 389 5311 Website: www.safetyshop.com Email: sales@safetyshop.com

Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS). Address: Fern Close, Pen-Y-Fan Industrial Estate, Oakdale, Gwent, NP11 3EH Tel: 01495 248454 Email: info@wras.co.uk
Website: www.wras.co.uk

Notes:

Please contact the Village Hall Adviser, based at your local Rural Community Council for further advice on all matters connected with your village hall. Contact details can be supplied by telephoning the ACRE office on 01285 653477 or visit the ACRE website at <http://www.acre.org.uk/zRCCNETWORK.htm>

ACRE would like to acknowledge the input of Louise Beaton our Village Hall Consultant in the production of this Village Hall Information Sheet.