

Church risk checklist

Slips, trips and falls

Slips, trips and falls are a major cause of injuries to volunteers, church members and visitors alike. Hazards are present not just in the church itself but in church halls, churchyards and car parks - in fact anywhere where people are likely to walk.

While most injuries are minor, serious injuries can require hospital treatment or lead to permanent disability. This checklist highlights some of the most common hazards and the control measures that can be put in place to reduce or eliminate the risk.

Checklist (check and tick as appropriate)

Check each item and tick 'yes' or 'no' as appropriate. **If you put 'yes', please make sure you have made the appropriate arrangements to ensure that the preventative measures are enacted. If you answer 'no' to any item, make sure you consider whether you do need to take any appropriate measures.**

Risk area	Common hazards	Preventative measures
Paths	Paths that become slippery when wet	Are handrails needed? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Do you arrange to sweep up leaves? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Do you use a proprietary algae remover? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Do you display warning signs when it is wet? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Snow and ice on paths and car parks	Do you remove using salt and grit as necessary, subject to the hazard not being increased? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you redirect travel routes to avoid hazard? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Do you display warning signs and/or isolate the area with tape/barriers? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Ramps for wheelchair users or for the movement of items using trolleys, etc	If these are for temporary use, are they removed when not in use? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Uneven footpaths and flagstones	Are they inspected regularly, and repaired and maintained? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Concealed kerbs	Do you ensure grass is cut regularly so that kerbs are clearly visible? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Floor surfaces	Floor surfaces that become slippery when wet, particularly in kitchen areas	Do you mop up spills immediately? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Continued overleaf..

Risk area	Common hazards	Preventative measures
Floor surfaces	Smooth floors such as wood, vinyl, tiles or terrazzo. <i>Floors in halls used for a variety of functions and by large numbers of people are particularly hazardous</i>	Do you avoid over-polishing and buffing? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Do you remove contamination such as water and food spills immediately? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Do you remove dust with regular cleaning? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Do you use a proprietary anti-slip solution? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Carpet edges, rugs and doormats	Have you fixed down carpet edges or do you use an edge strip? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Have you removed loose rugs and doormats? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Wires, cables and trailing leads	Are all electrical outlets permanently wired in? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Are cable covers only used for temporary installations? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Stairs	Worn and uneven staircases and steps, particularly to external boiler rooms, which may also become wet and covered in leaves and debris	Are stairs repaired and maintained in good order and is debris cleared regularly? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Do you provide a handrail, adequate lighting and a locked gate at the top of stairs? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Do you display warning signs? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Single steps or changes of level	Do you accentuate using lighting? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Do you display a warning sign? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Have you marked the edge if possible? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Balconies	Falls from balconies	Do you keep balconies locked when not in use? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Do you ensure supervision when in use? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Are rails at least 1.1 metres high and securely fixed? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Do you prohibit access to disused balconies? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Falls through floors	Do you prohibit access to unused balconies and other areas? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Do you undertake a detailed risk assessment and survey before starting any work in areas where floors may have become rotten? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Important advice

Obstructions

Make sure you keep all thoroughfares clear at all times.

Working at height

Make sure that you have read our checklist and guidance before considering working at height.

Next steps

Once you have reviewed this checklist you should also then complete a risk assessment using the risk assessment form available at: www.baptist-insurance.co.uk/churchguidance You should ensure that you keep a copy of this form for your records.

General advice

Elimination of risk

The best control measure of all is to eliminate the risk entirely. For example, if a path is in very poor condition or steps are badly worn, ask yourself whether they are really needed or could they be closed and an alternative route used instead.

Health and safety law and the duty of care

A Leadership Team owes a duty of care to all volunteers and can be prosecuted under The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. **Remember - before entering an old or disused balcony, ask yourself: "Am I really sure this is safe?"**

Further guidance

The Baptist Insurance website contains a wealth of information and advice to help you look after your church. Our Church Health and Safety Guidance Notes also contain detailed advice on avoiding slips, trips and falls. You can read the full guidance at www.baptist-insurance.co.uk/churchguidance

