

FIRE SAFETY IN CHURCH

Fire kills.

Smoke is a common cause of fire-related injury or death. Smoke spreads rapidly through a building - it rises, is trapped by the roof, then spreads to form an ever-deepening layer. Heat is trapped in the building so the temperature rapidly rises. Smoke causes breathing and visual difficulties.

PRECAUTIONS

(a) What we can all do:

- Arson is the commonest cause of church fires. The best security everyone can assist with is to use or visit the church as frequently as possible. Be vigilant and report anything suspicious to a Churchwarden.
- If you notice any damaged sockets, wires, flexes or plugs, etc., please tell a Churchwarden.
- Remember the little things:
 - keep stand-alone candles in the vestry when not in use (they can be moved and used improperly);
 - keep wood-polish cloths in an airtight tin (they can self-combust);
 - remove your notices, flyers or other paperwork when the need is over. Try not to leave unnecessary paper in the church or porch. Don't help an arsonist to find easy fuel!

(b) During services those on duty at the service should ensure:

- **Passages** between pews and **routes to doors** must be at least **1.05m (3ft 6in)** wide. In emergencies - including medical ones - a blockage could be fatal.
- If more than about 25 people are present, **both doors** must be unlocked.
- For a large service, sidespeople should be stationed on **both sides** of the church.
- The centre of the car park and the path leading to the porch must be kept clear of blockages - emergency vehicles must have **access**.

(c) Equipment

- The vestry and upper Tower have **smoke alarms** (high-pitched continuous noise).
 - **Fire extinguishers are located:**
 - Immediately outside the vestry - foam type. For use on organic materials and flammable liquids; lighter in weight than water.
 - In the Tower (ground floor) - carbon dioxide type. Carbon dioxide is useful where electricity is involved but much less efficient than water for fires in organic materials.
 - Beside the organ - carbon dioxide type (see above).
 - In the upper vestry - foam type (see above).
 - In the organ loft (gallery) foam type (see above).
- NB Do not attempt to use extinguishers if you are not confident in handling them, or if the situation is already unsafe.
- A **Fire Blanket** is located in the Lady Chapel.
 - Two **torches** are kept in the vestry, for use if electric power is lost. For a large service, or one after dark, these should be available to sidespeople on each side of the church. **Torches** are also available in the choir vestry and Lady Chapel for use if necessary.

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EMERGENCY

- (a) **Outside a service:** alert all others in the church, leave, and telephone 999, asking for Fire Service. Do not hang up before the operator has repeated the address (All Saints' Church, High Street, Banstead, SM7 2NN). Do not re-enter the church.
- (b) **During a regular service:** it is the **responsibility of the Duty Warden** to decide on and order evacuation.
- (c) **In other situations** (Teddies' 10 Minutes, weddings, funerals, etc.) this is the **responsibility of the person leading the service.**

Anyone else who notices signs of fire should immediately inform the person responsible.

- The Duty Warden should carry a **mobile phone**. In case of fire, switch this on, and ask someone else to move fast to call the Fire Service.
- The Duty Warden should then **ask everybody to leave**, stressing use of **both** doors. Ask them to **assemble in the Orchard**, taking only valuables immediately to hand. Use a microphone (eg on lectern) if possible, but be aware that power may rapidly be lost in a fire.
- **Sidespeople** are responsible for ensuring both doors are used. Use torches if smoke and/or loss of power mean poor visibility.
- **Sidespeople** must also ensure help is given where needed - remember needs of deaf, learning-disabled, and those who move with difficulty. Off-duty sidespeople should also help as necessary.
- Be aware that some people will try to go against the flow, especially parents trying to reach children.
- If possible safely: **Clergy and Servers** should check the Lady Chapel and Choir Vestry (remember the organist!) as they leave, to ensure no one is left at the east end. Torches are available in the Lady Chapel and Choir Vestry for use as necessary.
- If possible safely: the **Music Director** should ensure that all choir members leave.
- If possible safely: the **Duty Warden** should check the vestry and toilet, then close the doors to these.
- If possible safely: as he/she leaves, the **Duty Warden** should check the nave, aisles and Tower.
- For all of the above, the priority is to save life. **Do not add yourself to any casualty list.**
- In the Orchard, the **Clergy and sidespeople** should:
 - ensure children and parents are together;
 - check for medical problems and get help for these;
 - take charge of unaccompanied children;
 - ask people to stay (to help confirm nobody is left in the church);
 - provide seats for any who need them;
 - move into Institute in cold weather.
- The Duty Warden or available sidesperson should **meet the Fire Service** and give details they require. (NB: The main fuse box is located at the west end of the Tower, The nearest fire hydrant is in the High Street outside the Institute.)

Please **REPORT** all incidents of risk (eg candles found burning in inappropriate places, electrical sparking, etc.) to a Churchwarden. These **must be recorded** in the 'Church Fire Safety' file in the Parish Office.

If you are in any doubt about your potential role in an emergency, or have any questions, please ask me.

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