

The Church of St. Patrick Drumbeg

Health and Safety Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The success of our health and safety policy depends on the active contribution of all of our employees and workers: please therefore ensure that not only do you understand and follow all of our safety rules and regulations but that you contribute your own suggestions towards the progressive improvement in health and safety within our business.

We do not consider that there are any specific hazards particular to our working environment: however, please do not be complacent about safety because you work in an office. Accidents can happen anywhere but most can be avoided by using a little common sense and taking care.

A summary of our basic safety rules are reproduced below. These rules are intended to act as a continuing reminder to everyone of the essential elements of safe working practice and must be followed at all times. If necessary, training in the safe use of equipment will be provided.

GENERAL RULES

Always use tidy and systematic working methods which will ensure jobs are done safely and efficiently. Please dispose of waste materials by placing waste in the appropriate bins and ensuring that these are emptied regularly. All confidential papers must be shredded before discarding; any food waste, such as from lunches, should be disposed of in a bin which has a plastic liner.

Do not leave things lying on the floor or standing in or protruding into gangways. Corridors and stairs must be kept clear from obstructions at all times. Safe access to, and exit from, all offices and other areas must be maintained at all times. None of these areas should be used for casual storage purposes.

Take extra care if carrying hot drinks. Use the trays provided and avoid carrying up or down stairs. If something is spilt on the floor, see that it is cleaned up immediately.

Make sure that trailing telephone cables, electrical cables and flex from items of office equipment do not present a hazard. If they do, the office layout should be rearranged. Tape any trailing wires to the underside of your desk to prevent falling/tripping over them.

Do not leave drawers of cabinets or desks open to be fallen over. Only open one drawer of a filing cabinet at a time. Ensure filing cabinets are loaded evenly to avoid becoming unbalanced. Fill the bottom drawer first to prevent the cabinet from tipping and do not overload top drawers.

Never put sharp objects in wastepaper bins; wrap them up, label them clearly and set them aside for special collection. Do not leave drawing pins on the floor. Use separate containers for storing drawing pins and paper clips.

Be careful when using pins, staplers and the shredder. Before you use the shredder, make sure you know how to stop it in an emergency and ensure that you do not lean over it with any loose clothing, long hair etc. which could get caught in it.

Safety notices must clearly indicate the hazard to which they refer and must be kept in good order. Never remove a safety notice, cover it over with other announcements or obstruct it from clear view.

Routinely inspect your work equipment for any faults (e.g. loose or frayed flexes on electrical equipment, loose screws, broken springs or defective welds on chairs etc) and report any faults in equipment immediately to the [Health and Safety Officer](#). Do not attempt to repair any equipment unless you are qualified, trained and authorised to do so.

Never reach over or climb over equipment. Do not climb on boxes, filing cabinets, chairs etc to reach things - use the proper equipment.

Report poor floor surfaces and any required repairs to flooring materials to [both the Health and Safety Officer and the Sexton](#).

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

Do not use equipment on which the date on the Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) label has expired. Testing must be carried out by a competent person and testing of all equipment must be current and in accordance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

Do not make any adjustments to electrical connections unless specifically authorised to do so. Keep an eye on plugs and leads at your workstation and get them repaired as necessary. Look out for physical damage to the cable, failure of the cord grip at the plug and signs of overheating, or loose connections. Do not ignore obvious telltale signs such as faulty switching or intermittent stopping. Report any signs of electrical faults to [both the Health and Safety Officer and the Sexton](#).

Do not overload circuits, for example by plugging into adapters. Do not use taped joints to connect cables - if cables have to be joined, proper connectors must be used.

Please ensure that you turn off any electrical equipment at your workstation at the socket before unplugging and before cleaning, and also when you leave the premises each day. Do not pull out plugs by pulling on the cable.

Report any requirements for replacement bulbs or other faulty lighting immediately to the [Sexton](#).

FIRE PREVENTION

Fire exits must be kept clear at all times and fire extinguishers must always be easily accessible.

Fire equipment must be kept clear from obstruction and under no circumstances should fire or smoke doors be wedged open.

Please ensure you keep your work area free from risk of fire by removing unwanted waste paper from work areas, by never using highly flammable liquids or solvents carelessly and by avoiding a build-up of paper and other flammable materials, especially around any heat source. Paper and other materials should not be placed against radiators or near to/on top of any heaters.

If you need to keep any type of flammable eraser (i.e. duplicating spirit or aerosol dispenser essential for your work), you should store this as safely as possible. Keep the minimum amount necessary in your desk drawers: such items should be reduced to an absolute minimum, be kept in a metal cupboard or similar storage facility and not left lying around where they could present a serious hazard to the occupants of an office, or to fire fighters who may be called on to deal with a fire.

Never obstruct corridors, gangways or stairs.

You should not attempt to use a fire extinguisher unless you have been instructed in its use and it is possible to do so without any personal risk.

Fire drills will be held at least every six months. The person responsible for organising and monitoring these will be the [Chief Fire Warden](#).

Please treat fire drills as though they are the real thing. They are not a funny joke, but are designed to help ensure your safety in an emergency.

LIFTING AND HANDLING

Wherever possible, design your workload to minimise any lifting, for example, by keeping heavy files and breakable items on the middle and lower shelves, siting your most used files and books closest to your workstation, splitting loads before lifting them and making use of any trolleys which are available for conveying goods.

Always take care when lifting heavy loads and obtain help if necessary, especially with computers/heavy stationery. When carrying files or boxes, make sure that you can see where you are going, particularly if moving up or down stairs. Always ask a colleague for assistance before attempting to lift heavy objects. Do not over-reach or climb onto chairs or other furniture to reach items stored at height - use properly fixed ladders or steps where necessary.

Always follow these guidelines when:

Lifting:

1. Before lifting the object, check there are no sharp or rough parts sticking out.
2. Place your feet slightly apart to give a comfortable stance.
3. Keeping your feet flat on the floor, squat down, keeping your back straight.
4. Take a firm grip of the object and, keeping it as near as possible to the body, stand up using your legs to do the work.
5. If the object feels too heavy, or is awkward to manage on your own, do not attempt to lift it, get assistance.

Pulling/Pushing:

Pushing is much easier than pulling.

1. Always remain upright.
2. Keep your spine straight.
3. Put your hands straight out in front of you and grasp the object firmly.
4. Depending on the direction, lean backwards and/or forwards, transferring the weight to the most backward or forward foot.
5. Remain upright at all times, keeping your spine straight.

VDU USERS

Special regulations apply to those who habitually use VDUs for a significant part of their normal work. A risk assessment is made of each workstation. Ensure that you are aware of this and that you know how to adjust your screen to minimise glare and flicker, and to adjust your chair to the correct height.

Ensure that you take regular breaks from looking at your screen by alternating duties such as filing, telephone calls etc with screen work.

If you feel that you are suffering from eye strain at any time, speak to the [Health and Safety Officer](#).

We provide free eyesight examinations for workers who use VDUs regularly: full details are available from the [Health and Safety Officer](#) and our [Display Screen Equipment Policy](#).

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

A copy of our COSHH assessment is kept in the [Rectors Office](#).

Always read all hazard warning signs and the instruction labels on containers. They should tell you if, for example, a substance is poisonous, easily set on fire or can cause burns.

Before you use a substance, find out what to do if it spills onto your skin or clothes. Wear the rubber gloves provided in the kitchen if handling bleach.

Never transfer small quantities of any liquids or substances into unlabelled or wrongly labelled containers. This can be very dangerous for everyone you work with.

SMOKING

Always observe our "no smoking" policy throughout our premises and in our vehicles. This extends to the use of e-cigarettes.

See our separate policy on smoking, a copy of which is in the [Rectors Office](#), for further details.

SECURITY

Our premises are open at hours which are appropriate to Church Services, Functions and Organisational needs. Please ensure that all equipment is turned off, safety mechanisms are in place, and that any confidential documents or valuables are locked away before you leave the premises.

YOUR HEALTH

No employee will be allowed to work on the premises under the influence of alcohol and/or unlawful drugs. If you are taking any prescribed medication which is likely to make you feel drowsy or have any other side-effects which may be a risk to your safety, please mention this to [Rector](#).

Under no circumstances, whilst performing your duties as an employee, are you permitted to consume or bring alcoholic drinks or illegal drugs onto our premises.

On occasions, consumption of alcohol at church social events is permitted [at the discretion of either the Rector or the Select Vestry](#). However, such consumption must be reasonable and managers must remember their position of responsibility and ensure that anyone consuming alcohol acts in a responsible manner and does not drive or operate machinery when clearly not in a fit state to do so.

Should you come to work and be taken ill, please report to the [Sexton](#) before leaving the premises and he/she will ensure you are able to get home safely.

REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS OR HAZARDS

You should promptly report to [both the Health and Safety Officer and the Sexton](#) anything you think is liable to cause an accident, whether in your department or not.

Any accident, no matter how trivial, should be reported to [the Health and Safety Officer or the Sexton](#) using an Accident Report form, [available in the foyer of the Church or in the Kitchen of the Church Hall](#), as soon as possible after the event to ensure it is recorded and any necessary remedial action taken.

Any damaged or defective equipment should be reported to [both the Health and Safety Officer and the Sexton](#) immediately.

OTHER MATTERS

Finally, if you are in doubt about any instructions given to you in the use of equipment, materials, methods etc. PLEASE ASK before proceeding. Ensure that you read and understand the above guidelines, and that you comply with them. Health and safety is too important a subject to be taken lightly - mischievous behaviour or horseplay which endangers others, and failure to follow our rules is misconduct and will be dealt with through our disciplinary procedure.