



To comply with the
**FIRE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005 &
THE FIRE SAFETY (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2006**

FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

Blackhall St Columba's Church



Nominated Duty Holder:

Charity Trustees of the Congregation.

Address of Premises:

Columba Road, Edinburgh EH4 3QU.

Date of Fire Risk Assessment:

3rd June 2025.

Name of Fire Risk Assessor:

Lindsay S. Duguid BSc FRICS

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. THE PREMISES

- 1.1 Number of floors: 2.
- 1.2 Approximate floor area: 690 m².
- 1.3 Brief description of the structure of the premises: Stone built church with predominantly pitched roof covered with slates. Church halls of cavity brick construction with pitched and flat sections of roof covered with slates and mineral felt.
- 1.4 Use of the premises: Place of worship, church and community meetings and events.
- 1.5 Opening times: Variably but mostly on a daily basis.

2. THE OCCUPANTS

- 2.1 Approximate number of persons at any one time: Variable.
- 2.2 Approximate number of sleeping occupants: None.
- 2.3 Approximate number of persons with disabilities: Variable but small in number.

3. OCCUPANT CAPACITY

- 3.1 Set capacity limits for specific rooms/areas within the premises:
Sanctuary: 350. Main Hall: 200.

4. FIRE LOSS EXPERIENCE

- 4.1 Has there been recent or previous incidents of fire within the premises: Yes ☐ No ☒
If yes, provide details on the incident:

5. OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

5.1 Occupancy Risk Profile:

Occupants are awake and familiar with the premises:

Yes

☒

No

☐

Occupants are awake and unfamiliar with the premises:

Yes

☐

No

☐

Occupants are asleep in the premises:

Yes

☐

No

☐

5.2 Assessment Methodology:
Non-disruptive and non-invasive visual inspection method of the main occupied areas of the premises.

5.3 Assessment of Required Fire Safety Measures:
The Practical Fire Safety Guidance document for Non-Domestic Premises Scotland was used as reference against which existing fire safety measures provided to the building could be compared. General guidance notes, provided in each section of this fire risk assessment template, has been taken in the form of summarised extracts from the below guidance document.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/practical-fire-safety-guidance-existing-non-residential-premises-9781788511322/>

5.4 Resources and Authority for Fire Safety Management:
The nominated Duty Holder is empowered to ensure legislative requirements for fire safety management are met and are implemented.

6. REVIEW OF THE FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

- The fire risk assessment for the building should be reviewed regularly, including where:
- There is reason to suspect the assessment it is no longer valid;
 - There have been significant changes to the premises layout, changes to organisational measures, changes to the use of the premises or due to increased risk of fire as a result of new work activities or new plant/equipment;
- OR
- Following any significant incidents of fire within the premises;
 - Following recommendations made by the enforcing authority.

6.2 RELEVANT FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

The following fire safety legislation (as amended) applies to these premises:
Fire (Scotland) Act 2005
The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006

The above legislation is enforced by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

FIRE HAZARDS AND THEIR ELIMINATION OR CONTROL

7. ELECTRICAL SOURCES OF IGNITION

7.1 Reasonable measures taken to prevent fires of electrical origin? Yes ☒ No ☐

7.2 More specifically:

Fixed electrical installation periodically inspected and tested? Yes ☒ No ☐

Portable appliance testing carried out? Yes ☒ No ☐

Suitable limitation of trailing leads and adapters? Yes ☒ No ☐

7.3 Summary of Findings: No issues.

7.4 Conclusion and any required action: N/A.

7.5 General guidance note:

*Lack of preventative maintenance increases the likelihood of fire starting in equipment. A competent person should regularly maintain equipment & plant, machinery and office equipment. Appropriate signs and notices on the safe use of equipment may be necessary. Common maintenance and inspection frequencies include but are not limited to; Fixed electrical installations: every 5 years
Portable appliances: annually*

8. SMOKING AND NAKED FLAMES

8.1 Reasonable measures taken to prevent fires as a result of smoking and naked flames i.e., candles or lanterns. Yes ☒ No ☐

8.2 More specifically:

Smoking prohibited in the building? Yes ☒ No ☐

Suitable arrangements for the use of candles? n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

8.3 Summary of Findings: No breaches of guidance.

8.4 Conclusion and any required action: Continuance of regular reminders.

8.5 General guidance note:

Where smoking takes place in external areas, consideration should be given to the risk of combustible materials being ignited. Appropriate signs and notices on the buildings no smoking policy may be necessary. Although the use of candles in church buildings is not strictly prohibited, the extent of use and their location in the building where used, including the safety arrangements to prevent accidental fires, must be managed carefully or substituted for safer alternative.

9. WILFUL FIRE RAISING

- 9.1 Does basic security against wilful fire raising by outsiders appear reasonable? Yes ☒ No ☐
- 9.2 Are external bins or combustible items in close proximity to the premises or available for ignition by outsiders? Yes ☒ No ☐
- 9.3 Summary of Findings: Satisfactory arrangements in place.
- 9.4 Conclusion and any required action: None.
- 9.5 General guidance note:
The possibility of deliberate fire setting should be considered. This may be particularly relevant for premises with a history of fire setting or vandalism. This may involve ensuring external areas are well lit, ensuring the building is secured against unauthorised access, and that external waste bins are a suitable distance away from the building.
Implemented security measures should not compromise means of escape and the ability for occupants to evacuate.

10. PORTABLE HEATERS AND HEATING INSTALLATIONS

- 10.1 Are portable heaters used within the building? Yes ☐ No ☒
- 10.2 Are fixed heating installations provided to the building? Yes ☒ No ☐
- 10.3 Are fixed heating installations subject to regular maintenance? n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐
- 10.4 Summary of Findings: No issues.
- 10.5 Conclusion and any required action: None.
- 10.6 General guidance note:
Lack of preventative maintenance increases the likelihood of fire starting in equipment. A competent person should regularly maintain fixed heating installations.
Appropriate signs and notices on the safe use of heating equipment may be necessary.
Common maintenance and inspection frequencies include but are not limited to;
Solid fuel heating systems (gas/oil/Lpg): Annually
Portable heaters: annually (PAT testing)

11. COOKING

- 11.1 Are reasonable measures taken to prevent fires as a result of cooking? n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

11.2 More specifically:

Are cooker filters changed and where provided, extraction ductwork cleaned?

n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

Suitable fire extinguishing appliances readily available?

Yes ☒ No ☐

11.3 Summary of Findings: No issues.

11.4 Conclusion and any required action: None.

11.5 General guidance note:

Lack of preventative maintenance increases the likelihood of fire starting in equipment. A competent person should regularly maintain fixed cooking installations. Regular testing of portable white kitchen goods i.e., kettles, microwaves and hot water urns, is also required (PAT testing).

Appropriate signs and notices on the safe use of cooking equipment and how to isolate gas or electrical supplies may be necessary.

12. LIGHTNING PROTECTION

12.1 Does the building have a lightning conductor protection system?

Yes ☐ No ☒

12.2 Is the system subject to regular test and inspection?

n/a ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐

12.3 Summary of Findings:

12.4 Conclusion and any action required:

12.5 General guidance note:

Most churches will benefit from a lightning protection system and in many cases a tower only system may provide an acceptable level of protection. Recommended inspection and testing of new systems once installed is recommended at intervals not exceeding 12 months, however regimes will depend on the level of protection. For most simple systems an interval of two and a half years may be appropriate or immediately following a strike or suspected strike.

NB Under the Church of Scotland Church Insurance Scheme the installation of a lightning conductor system is not usually a policy condition where insurance cover is provided. However, installing lightning protection, as part of a risk assessment strategy together with its ongoing maintenance and testing is recommended.

13. HOUSEKEEPING

13.1 Is the standard of housekeeping adequate?

Yes ☒ No ☐

13.2 More specifically:

Combustible materials appear to be separated from ignition sources?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Avoidance of unnecessary accumulation of combustible materials or waste?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Appropriate storage of hazardous materials?

n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

Are regular housekeeping inspections carried out?

Yes ☒ No ☐

13.3 Summary of Findings: No issues.

13.4 Conclusion and any required action: None.

13.5 General guidance note:

The control of combustible materials should be achieved by attention to good housekeeping principles.

Appropriate practices are:

- *Not storing combustible materials in boiler rooms, plant rooms or electrical mains cupboards*
- *Limiting or avoidance of high volumes of combustible storage in attics or basement areas*
- *Control and regular disposal of waste and recyclable materials*
- *Regular building checks to ensure the storage arrangements are appropriate*

14. HAZARDS INTRODUCED BY OUTSIDE CONTRACTORS AND BUILDING WORKS

14.1 Are fire safety conditions imposed on outside contractors?

Yes ☒ No ☐

14.2 Is there satisfactory control over works carried out in the building by outside contractors (including "hot work" permits)?

Yes ☒ No ☐

14.3 Summary of Findings: No issues.

14.5 Conclusion and any required action: None.

14.6 General guidance note:

Fires often occur when buildings undergoing refurbishment or alteration. Building works can introduce new ignition risks or combustibles and may have an effect on current fire safety measures or fire safety equipment.

Cooperation between the contractor and duty holders is paramount to ensure building fire safety measures are not compromised and that adequate controls are in place prior to any works going ahead.

15. DANGEROUS / FLAMMABLE SUBSTANCES

15.1 If dangerous substances are, or could be, used, has a risk assessment or COSHH assessment been carried out? n/a ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐

15.2 Summary of Findings: N/A

15.3 Conclusion and any required action:

15.4 General guidance note:

Certain substances and materials are by their nature flammable, oxidising or explosive. In church premises the most likely form of held flammable substances will be cleaning aerosols, gas cylinders, LPG cylinders, paints and solvents.

The principles of safe handling and storage of dangerous substances are:

- *Reducing the held volume of dangerous substances to the smallest reasonable amount*
- *Safe storage, preferably locked away, and segregated from significant sources of ignition*
- *Where gases are stored in cylinders, they should ideally be located outside in appropriate safe storage cages.*

FIRE PROTECTION MEASURES

16. MEANS OF ESCAPE FROM FIRE

- 16.1 It is considered that the building is provided with reasonable means of escape in case of fire. Yes ☒ No ☐
- 16.2 More specifically:
- Are escape routes clear of obstructions or obstacles? Yes ☒ No ☐
- Adequate number of fire exits from each room or area? Yes ☒ No ☐
- Are exits easily openable without the need for keys to operate? Yes ☒ No ☐
- Fire exit doors open in direction of escape? Yes ☒ No ☐
- Are self-closing fire doors provided?
If yes, are they functional and fit for purpose? n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐
- 16.3 Is it considered that the building is provided with reasonable arrangements for means of escape for wheelchair users? Yes ☒ (throughout building) Yes ☐ (part of building only) No ☐
- 16.4 Summary of Findings: No issues.
- 16.5 Conclusion and any required action: None.
- 16.6 General guidance note:
Means of escape is providing safe escape routes to allow all occupants to move, or be assisted towards an unenclosed safe area (an external fire assembly point). The maximum numbers of people in the building and their capability to escape safely, including the time it will take to evacuate should be considered when assessing means of escape within each building.
Rooms containing more than 60 persons should have at least 2 exits.
To assist with evacuation, doors across escape routes should open in the direction of travel where there are 60 persons or more are likely to use the escape route.
In some small premises a single escape route will be acceptable, in other larger premises there should be at least 2 exits and independent escape routes from each floor.

17. MEASURES TO LIMIT FIRE SPREAD AND DEVELOPMENT

- 17.1 It is considered that there is:
- Fire compartmentation of a reasonable standard. n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐
- Limitation of combustibile wall linings that may Unknown ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

promote fire spread.

Reasonable level of fire stopping to wall or ceiling penetrations to walls and ceilings in high fire risk rooms? i.e., boiler rooms, mains electrical rooms.

Unknown ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

17.2 Summary of Findings: No issues.

17.3 Conclusion and any required action: None.

17.4 General guidance note:

A fire compartment is part of a building constructed to provide a fire-resisting barrier to prevent the spread of fire and smoke to or from another area of the building.

Fire resisting barriers to the passage of fire and smoke will include passive protection measures such as fire rated wall and ceiling materials, including fire rated door sets.

The life safety objectives for compartmentation may be to:

- *Reduce the numbers of occupants immediately at risk from fire*
- *Reduce the distances travelled to an area of relative safety when evacuating*
- *Restricting the size and growth of fire*
- *To protect occupants where they may be delayed evacuation of the premises*
- *To create a protected zone within an escape route or stairwell for disabled persons*

18. EMERGENCY ESCAPE LIGHTING

18.1 Reasonable provision of emergency escape lighting provided to key areas within the building?

n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

18.2 Summary of Findings: No issues.

18.3 Conclusion and any required action: None.

18.4 General guidance note:

Emergency lighting is lighting designed to operate automatically in the event of general power failure. The size and type of premises and the risk to occupants will determine whether there is a need for emergency escape lighting.

For small premises predominantly occupied during daytime hours, and in which the escape routes are simple and straightforward, borrowed light may be relied upon to illuminate escape routes.

In larger complex premises, particularly in those with extensive basements, windowless escape corridors/stairwells or where there are significant numbers of occupants, including frequent use outwith daytime hours where borrowed light cannot be relied upon, emergency lighting is likely to be needed to illuminate key escape routes and large rooms of assembly.

19. FIRE SAFETY SIGNS AND NOTICES

19.1 Reasonable standard of fire safety signs and notices? Yes ☒ No ☐

19.2 Summary of Findings: No issues.

19.3 Conclusion and any required action: None.

19.4 General guidance note:

Escape route signs are used to indicate escape routes not in normal use and are only necessary where there might otherwise be confusion regarding the route to follow in the event of fire. In public access buildings, persons may be unfamiliar with the location of alternative exits therefore signs identifying exit locations are important.

The following criteria applies to escape route signs:

- *They should provide enough information to enable people to identify escape routes*
- *Where the location of an exit is not obvious, signs with directional arrows may be provided along the route i.e., on walls, above exit doors, above final exit doors.*

Additional safety signs are used in premises to identify fire equipment, such as fire extinguishers and break glass call points, or to instruct persons to keep fire doors closed and how to operate security devices on final exit doors.

20. MEANS OF GIVING WARNING IN CASE OF FIRE

20.1 Electrical fire alarm system provided? Yes ☒ No ☐

20.2 Automatic fire detection provided? Yes ☒ No ☐

20.3 Extent of automatic fire detection generally appropriate for the occupancy and fire risk? n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

20.4 Summary of Findings: No issues.

20.5 Conclusion and any required action: None.

20.6 General guidance note: N/A

A fire warning system allows occupants to be alerted and the emergency procedures to be implemented. It is a legal requirement to provide means of giving warning of fire.

In some small premises a fire may be obvious soon after it starts. In such cases and where travel distances to exit are short, a shouted warning fire or a simple manually operated device that can be heard throughout the building from any single point, may be all that is needed.

In larger buildings, particularly those with more than one floor, numerous rooms, or are multi-occupied, where a shout of fire will not be heard throughout the building, an electrical fire alarm system incorporating sounders, manual call points, automatic fire detection and zoned control panel is likely to be required.

Information on electrical fire alarm systems for non-domestic buildings is contained with British Standard BS5839: Part 1.

21. FIRE EXTINGUISHING APPLIANCES

21.1 Reasonable provision of portable fire extinguishers? Yes ☒ No ☐

21.2 Hose reels provided? Yes ☐ No ☒

21.3 Are all fire extinguishing appliances readily accessible? Yes ☒ No ☐

21.4 Automatic Water or Gas Suppression Systems Provide? Yes ☐ No ☒

21.5 Are specific persons trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers? Yes ☒ No ☐

21.6 Summary of Findings: No issues.

21.7 Conclusion and any required action: None.

21.8 General guidance note:

A small fire tackled with fire-fighting equipment in the early stages may be prevented from developing into a fire of life-threatening proportions. Fire fighting equipment can fall into one of two categories

(a) It is designed for use by persons (fire extinguishers, fire blankets)

(b) It is a fixed installation, such as a water suppression system, which operates automatically in the event of fire.

It is a legal requirement to provide means for fighting fires within buildings and this commonly will fall into the category of providing portable fire extinguishers, positioned on escape routes, adjacent to final exit doors, and where necessary positioned next to identified hazards I.e., boiler rooms, electrical cupboards, kitchens.

Person should receive suitable information, instruction and training on the use of fire fighting equipment where necessary.

MANAGEMENT OF FIRE SAFETY

22. PROCEDURES AND ARRANGEMENTS

22.1 Fire safety is managed by: Charity trustees of the congregation.

22.2 Is there a suitable record of the fire safety arrangements? Yes ☒ No ☐

22.3 Appropriate fire action plan/procedures in place? Yes ☒ No ☐

More specifically:

Are procedures in the event of fire appropriate and properly documented? n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

Are there suitable arrangements for summoning and meeting fire and rescue service? Yes ☒ No ☐

Are there suitable arrangements for ensuring that the premises have been evacuated? Yes ☒ No ☐

Is there a suitable fire assembly point(s)? Yes ☒ No ☐

Are there adequate procedures for evacuation of any disabled people who are likely to be present? Yes ☒ No ☐

Are regular fire drills carried out to test fire procedures? Yes ☒ No ☐

22.4 Summary of Findings: No issues.

22.5 Conclusion and any required action: None.

22.6 General guidance note:

An emergency fire action plan should set out the action that all persons take in the event of fire. It is a management responsibility to have in place an emergency fire action plan specific to the premises and to have in place arrangements to implement the plan. Stewarding and crowd control are vital components in the safe evacuation of the public from large places of assembly.

23. TRAINING

23.1 Are nominated persons given adequate fire safety instruction and training? Yes ☒ No ☐

23.2 Summary of findings: No issues.

23.3 Conclusion and any required action: None.

23.4 General guidance note:

It is important that key personnel know what they have to do to safeguard themselves and others on the premises and to have an awareness of the importance of their actions including risk reduction, maintenance of fire safety measures and action if there is a fire. Fire safety training should be specific to the building and should cover, but not limited to, the following:

- *Fire prevention and fire safety measures for the building*
- *Action to take upon discovering fire or hearing the alarm*
- *How to raise the alarm, and instruction on the fire alarm control panel (if applicable)*
- *Procedures for evacuating visitors and public, including disabled persons*
- *The location of all fire exit routes and the use fire exit doors*
- *The location, and where appropriate, the use of provided fire extinguishers*
- *The arrangements for calling the Fire and Rescue Services*

24. TESTING AND MAINTENANCE

24.1 Monthly testing of fire detection and alarm system? n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

24.2 Annual service and test of fire detection and alarm system by a competent person? n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

24.3 Monthly functionality check of emergency lighting? n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

24.4 Annual service and inspection of emergency lighting system by a competent person? n/a ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐

24.5 Annual inspection of fire extinguishers by a competent person? Yes ☒ No ☐

24.6 Summary of Findings: No issues.

24.7 Conclusion and any required action: None.

24.8 General guidance note:

There should be checks, periodic inspection and maintenance of provided fire safety equipment. Any defects identified as part of regular checks should be put right as soon as possible. The maintenance and testing of some systems and equipment will fall within the recommendations of a British Standard, or in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. The Health and Safety Toolkit provides frequencies and regimes for the most common fire safety equipment provided in church buildings.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT RISK MATRIX

Potential consequences of fire → Likelihood of fire ↓	Slight harm	Moderate harm	Extreme harm
Low	Trivial risk	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk
Medium	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk	Substantial risk
High	Moderate risk	Substantial risk	Intolerable risk

Taking into account the fire prevention measures observed at the time of this risk assessment, it is considered that the hazard from fire (likelihood of fire) at these premises is:

Low Risk ☒ Medium Risk ☐ High Risk ☐

In this context, a definition of the above terms is as follows:

Low: Low likelihood of fire as a result of negligible potential sources of ignition.

Medium: Normal fire hazards (e.g., potential ignition sources) for this type of premises occupancy and the processes being carried out, with fire hazards generally subject to proper controls (other than minor shortcomings).

High: Lack of adequate controls applied to one or more significant fire hazards within the premises, such as to result in significant increase in likelihood of fire.

Taking into account the nature of the building and the number and type of occupants, as well as the fire protection and procedural arrangements observed at the time of this fire risk assessment, it is considered that the consequences for life safety in the event of fire would be:

Slight harm ☒ Moderate harm ☐ Extreme harm ☐

In this context, a definition of the above terms is as follows:

Slight harm: Outbreak of fire unlikely to result in serious injury or death of any occupant (other than an occupant sleeping in a room in which a fire occurs).

Moderate harm: Outbreak of fire could foreseeably result in injury (including serious injury) of one or more occupants, but it is unlikely to involve multiple fatalities.

Extreme harm: Significant potential for serious injury or death of one or more occupants.

Note: Although the purpose of this section is to place the fire risk in context the above approach to fire risk assessment is subjective and for guidance only.

Any significant deficiencies identified throughout the assessment process should be acted upon to reduce the risk fire and risk to life safety. Actions should be prioritised and completed within reasonable timescales.

END