

Health and safety legislation and village halls

This information sheet explains how the key statutory requirements of health and safety legislation affect village halls. It provides hall management committees with the information and documentation they need to address them.



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Introduction

The proliferation of health and safety legislation can seem daunting to volunteer committee members but everyone, whether managing or hiring a village hall, will want to ensure that the building is safe and fit for purpose.

The aim of this information sheet is to explain the key statutory requirements as they affect village halls and to provide volunteers managing those buildings with the information and documentation they need to address them.

The emphasis in legislation is prevention of accidents through risk assessment. It is therefore important that the key action a committee needs to take is to set up a routine to look at their building and equipment, assess the possible risk of an accident occurring and take steps to minimise any risks. Records are essential and sample documents are provided with this information sheet.

Invaluable information from a range of sources has been used in the preparation of this information sheet. 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.

In this information sheet the term 'village halls' is used to cover a variety of community buildings, such as village halls, community centres, church halls, playing field pavilions and parish/town council run halls unless otherwise stated.



1 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 2.

District council environmental health departments and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 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 A). 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.

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

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 HSE) 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 and 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 Section 10).

Carry out a risk
assessment at least
every two years

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 should be subject to review at a management committee meeting once a year (e.g. the first meeting after the AGM).

2

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 A, 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.

2.1 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 by law, display a poster or distribute a pocket card setting out information on health and safety law. The poster, pocket cards and other formats can be ordered from HSE Books and booksellers. Employers can check that they have a genuine HSE law

poster by checking the unique, serially numbered hologram on each poster. The poster is printed using a new fully bio-degradable form of plastic. At current VAT rates the standard version costs £9.00 with other versions varying in price according to size and durability. Further information is available in **Section 10**.

2.2 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 5 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.

2.3 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)

Every employer must by law, display a poster or distribute a pocket card setting out information on health and safety law

- 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.

2.4 The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

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.

Training should be provided for those using and maintaining equipment

2.5 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).

2.6 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.

2.7 The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH) Regulations

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 HSE if necessary.

The CoSHH assessment should follow the same steps as a risk assessment (see **Section 5**). See Section 10 for details of a free online CoSHH risk assessment service and further sources of information.

2.8 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 7 for further information.

2.9 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 NICEIC approved. Depending on the type of electrical equipment various checks may be needed weekly, monthly or annually and the manufacturers or electricians instructions can be used to work out the frequency of the hall's system of checks needed. The checks should be carried out as appropriate to the nature of the premises and its use and exact details of what is required can be obtained from the various manufacturers and installers. 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. 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 Section 10.

2.10 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 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 Order is 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 (e.g. 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).

The main emphasis under the Order is towards reducing the risk of fire and preventing fire

- 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 5).
- 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.

2.11 The Licensing Act 2003

The Licensing Act 2003 has four licensing objectives:

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

Many village halls do not need a Premises Licence for entertainment purposes. However, a Premises Licence will still be required for:

- any entertainment between 11pm and 8am
- any entertainment to an audience of more than 500 people
- any exhibition of a film, where the intention is to make a profit, including raising money for charity (i.e. it is not a film club, film society, or local social group screening – see cinema section below).
- any boxing or wrestling entertainment.

For a performance of live music, the playing of recorded music, or an exhibition of a film, the village hall management committee must give prior written permission to the organiser for the entertainment activity to take place in the hall. This is a condition of the deregulation and is a legislative requirement. This can be done through the use of a formal hiring agreement. For an exhibition of a film, the hiring agreement should also stipulate that the organiser is responsible for ensuring that each screening abides by age classification ratings.

The village hall management committee must give prior written permission to the organiser for the entertainment activity to take place in the hall. This is a condition of the deregulation and is a legislative requirement

Village halls applying for a Premises Licence for the sale of alcohol 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's Information Sheet 9, Entertainment in village halls**.

Village halls applying for a Premises Licence for the sale of alcohol are required to submit an operating schedule

2.12 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 risk of injury. The management committee should do a risk analysis (see Section 5). 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.

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

2.13 The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

There is an explicit 'duty to manage asbestos' in non-domestic premises included in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. In order to comply with these regulations village hall management committees will need to:

- take reasonable steps to find out if asbestos is present in the premises and assess the condition of the materials
- presume that materials do contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not
- prepare a record of location and condition of the materials and assess the risk from them
- prepare and implement the plan to manage the risk
- provide information on the location and condition of the material to anyone who is liable to disturb it
- periodically review and monitor the plan and the arrangements to act on it so that the plan remains relevant and up-to-date

As asbestos was used as a building material from the 1950's through to the mid-1980's it is likely that anyone carrying out construction and maintenance work may come across material containing asbestos (e.g. stripping out old insulation, ceiling tiles, asbestos cement sheets.)

It is essential that any works carried out are in accordance with 2012 regulations.

The HSE provides useful guides and hall committees undertaking work are strongly advised to consider the HSE guidance.

ACRE's Information Sheet 14, **Asbestos** is also a useful source of information.

2.14 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 Section 10).

2.15 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. ACRE's Information Sheet 20, Health and hygiene in village halls, provides further information and suggests a range of standards appropriate for different circumstances.

2.16 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. Further information is available in **ACRE's Information Sheet 5, Village halls, children and young people** or contact your local ACRE Network member. See Section 10.

2.17 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.

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

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 Section 10 for further information.

If breaches of regulations are found in the certified work, the legal responsibility falls upon the approved plumber and not on the village hall

3 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 Section 10 for contact details)
 - Environmental health officer at the district council
 - Fire Brigade
 - Citizens Advice Bureau

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

4 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 B**. 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

A health and safety policy 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

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 Section 10 for further information.

5 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 Section 10). There are a number of different methods of rating risks and the one used in Section 5.7 is one possibility which helps to make a comparative assessment of one risk against another.

Sample Risk Assessment forms are given in **Appendix C**. (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.

5.1 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.

5.2 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".

5.3 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.

5.4 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 C** 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".

5.5 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).

5.6 What is risk?

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

A mixed group is more likely to spot different hazards

The HSE define a hazard as "anything that can cause harm"

5.7 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
2. Possible
3. Occasional
4. Frequent
5. Regular
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
2. Minor injuries
3. Major – one person
4. Major – many people
5. Death of 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 a 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** e.g. 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. See Appendix C for a sample report which can be photocopied.

HSE guidance states 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 2.12)
- 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.

5.8 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 C. 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 a 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 Section 10). There is no obligation to follow their recommendations but the hall must meet equivalent standards of fire safety.

ACRE's Information Sheet 37, Fire safety in village halls outlines the responsibilities of village hall 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.

5.9 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 (e.g. 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 Section 10 for contact details.

6 First aid

6.1 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.

6.2 The first aid box

The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standard for first aid boxes states that they should be green with a white cross, which is instantly recognisable to anyone requiring first aid.

Village hall committees are advised to purchase a first aid box for up to ten persons (low risk) either via a chemist shop or specialist retailer on online. If purchasing online, ensure that the first aid kit is for the UK market as other countries have different content requirements. The new British Standard (BS – 8599-1) for first aid box contents came into effect on 30 June 2011 and must have updated contents by 31 December 2011. When purchasing a first aid kit check that it is suitable for the workplace and not designed for the 'home' market. A small, standard workplace (low risk) first aid box should contain:

- 1 guidance card/contents list
- 2 sterile eye pads (No. 16)
- 2 triangular bandages individually wrapped and preferably sterile
- 6 safety pins
- 40 assorted low allergy washproof plasters
- 4 medium wound dressings (No.8)
- 2 finger dressings
- Conforming bandage 7.5cm x 4.5m
- 1 large wound dressing (No.9)
- 20 sterile cleansing wipes
- Microporous tape 2.5cm x 10m
- 6 pairs powder free gloves

The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standard for first aid boxes states that they should be green with a white cross, which is instantly recognisable to anyone requiring first aid

- 1 revive aid (CPR) mask
- 1 disposable heat retaining blanket (adult size)
- 1 sterile Burnshield® dressing 10 x 10cm
- 1 pair scissors.

Additional items may be added depending on the type of activities and age groups which meet in the hall:

- instant ice pack
- tweezers
- sterile water – if access to running water is limited
- eye wash kit – useful if children’s activities include sand play or for some adult craft activities
- blue plasters – essential if food preparation is done on the premises
- crepe bandages.

Never include creams, pills or tablets as they may be accessible to children or vulnerable adults using the hall. They may also cause serious illness or allergic reactions if given without prior knowledge of the recipient’s health history.

Someone should be appointed to keep the first aid box stocked. Many items, particularly sterile ones, are marked with expiry dates and these need to be replaced by the dates given.

A suitable location to store the first aid box might be on the wall or in a cupboard or drawer in the kitchen, where there is access to clean running water and all users can be expected to have access at any time. The benefits of wall mounting are that anyone can see, at a glance, if the box is in place or not. (Brackets may come with the first aid box or can be ordered online for as little as 50p). If it is stored in a locked drawer or cupboard, the key must be made available on site whilst the hall is in use. A balance needs to be made between ensuring that the box is accessible to all user groups including those in wheelchairs and ensuring that the box is not accessible to small children.

Whichever option is preferred it must be clearly signed. Signs are available from stationers or online.

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 HSE Guidance notes 'Basic Advice on First Aid at Work' for further information. Full contact details are listed in Section 10.

6.3 Providing appointed people/first aiders

An appointed person is someone who will be responsible for ensuring that the first aid box is replenished, that the first aid signs are clear and visible and that the accident book is available (See Section 7). It would be the appointed person's role to report any incidents which have been recorded in the accident book back to the management committee.

The management committee may feel that the responsibility should be shared by more than one person so that there is always at least one person available during holiday periods. 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.

The hall or building's own appointed person does not need to have any first aid training and is not expected to be attendant at the venue during hire. There are, however, one day courses available in central locations from St John Ambulance, Red Cross and other reputable trainers who conduct HSE approved Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) training. The course covers simple first aid techniques, how to take charge of a situation and what to do if someone has an accident or becomes ill whilst in the building. Certificates are valid for 3 years. Further information in Section 10.

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 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.

7 Recording accidents/incidents

7.1 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.

7.2 Reporting accidents/incidents

Incidents should be reported using the online forms that are available on the HSE - website www.hse.gov.uk. Only fatal and major incidents can be reported by telephone to the Incident Contact Centre using 0345 300 9923.

Incidents should be reported using the online forms

7.3 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.

7.4 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 the HSE. 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, 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.

If a worker sustains an occupational injury resulting from an accident, their injury should be reported if they are incapacitated for more than seven days. There is no longer a requirement to report occupational injuries that result in more than three days of incapacitation, but you must still keep a record of such injuries.

8 Hiring procedures

8.1 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. See Section 10.

8.2 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) and the need to report any faults or damage and to whom.

8.3 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 each hirer's 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.

A profusion of notices beginning 'Do Not...' often become ignored!

9 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's Information Sheet 7, Village hall insurance cover.**

Employer's 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.

10 Sources of further information and advice

ACRE provides an information and advice service for committees managing halls through the **ACRE Network**. ACRE publishes a range of village hall publications and information sheets to support the service, which are available from local ACRE Network members.

ACRE publications that may be of particular interest to readers of this publication are listed below:

- Model Hiring Agreement
- Information Sheet 5, Village halls, children and young people
- Information Sheet 7, Insurance cover
- Information Sheet 9, Entertainment in village halls
- Information Sheet 14, Asbestos
- Information Sheet 20, Health and hygiene in village halls
- Information Sheet 37, Fire safety in village halls.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has offices all across the UK and they provide a comprehensive selection of priced and free resources and information on health and safety issues. Many of their publications are available to download from their website.

HSE Health and safety poster ISBN: 9780717663149:
cost £9 HSE Books telephone: 01787 881165 Website:
<http://books.hse.gov.uk/hse/public/home.jsf>

The HSE can also provide a comprehensive list of approved EFAW/FAW training organisations.

Head Office: Redgrave Court, Merton Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 7HS Telephone information line: 0845 345 0055 Website: www.hse.gov.uk

Guide No. 6 Fire safety risk assessment in small and medium places of assembly ISBN 978 185112 82 04 is also available from the Department for Communities and Local Government website to download: www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk

Play England Homerton Grove Adventure Playgroup Wardle Street, London, E9 6BX provide a range of useful resources such as an Implementation Guide for managing risk in play provision. Telephone: 07802 722412 Email: Info@playengland.net www.playengland.org.uk

St John Ambulance

St John Ambulance provides information on first aid training courses, free first aid advice and a shop for first aid supplies. Tel: 0844 770 4800 (for commercial courses) Tel: 08700 10 49 50 (for all other queries). Website: www.sja.org.uk

The British Red Cross

British Red Cross provides information on training, supplies and advice. Tel: 0844 412 2804 Website: www.redcross.org.uk

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

Useful contacts

Safetyshop

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

Appendix A

Progress Checklist

The numbers below cross reference to the paragraphs in Section 2.

| Legislation | Action needed | Does it apply? | Has it been done? |
|--|--|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 2.1 Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 | Provide safe premises; Provide HSE poster or leaflet with contact addresses to employees. | Yes | |
| 2.2 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regs 1999 | Risk Assessment and follow up. | Where there are employees* | |
| 2.3 Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regs 1991/1992 | Look after employee welfare (heating, sanitation etc.). Provide first aid box. | Where there are employees* | |
| 2.4 Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regs 1998 | Where equipment is used: risk assessment, follow up, training and maintenance. | Where equipment is used* | |
| 2.5 Manual Handling Operations Regs 1992 | Risk Assessment of operations involving moving furniture/equipment and follow up. | Where there are employees* | |
| 2.6 Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 | Provide adequate protective equipment (e.g. gloves, safety glasses). | Where there are employees* | |
| 2.7 The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (CoSHH) | Risk assessment for substances used and follow up. | Where there are employees* | |
| 2.8 Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regs 1995 (RIDDOR) | Provide an Accident Book or forms. Report all serious incidents. | Where there are employees* | |
| 2.9 Electricity at Work Regs 1989 | All electrical systems and equipment to be installed and maintained in safe condition; routine checks as appropriate; Portable appliances to be tested annually. | Yes | |
| 2.10 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 | |

| Legislation | Action needed | Does it apply? | Has it been done? |
|--|---|--|-------------------|
| 2.11 The Licensing Act 2003 | Risk assessments and health & safety policy may be expected as part of operating schedule. | Yes | |
| 2.12 The Occupiers Liability Act 1984 | Ensure any dangers on the premises (including outside) are dealt with by warnings and/or fencing as appropriate. | Yes | |
| 2.13 The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 | Locate any asbestos, check its condition, manage the risk. See Information Sheet 14. | Yes | |
| 2.14 Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regs 1992 | Check Health and Safety Handbook for details. | Where employees use VDUs* | |
| 2.15 The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006 | All food provided on the premises must be safe. | Yes | |
| | Food Businesses must be registered in writing to the district (or borough) council. | See Information Sheet 20 to check | |
| | Specifies basic food hygiene standards for premises used for food preparation – see Information 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 Information Sheet 20. | Yes if food is regularly prepared on the premises | |
| | Certain foods are subject to temperature control requirements, refrigeration may be required. See Information Sheet 20. | Yes, if food is prepared or served on the premises | |
| 2.16 The Children Act 1989 | Organisations providing childcare must register and comply with inspections. | Where child care takes place | |
| 2.17 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's Information Sheet 20, Health and hygiene in village halls** regarding food safety.

Appendix B

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 ofVillage 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

TheVillage Hall

Management Committee has overall responsibility for health and safety

atVillage 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 department 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 (e.g. 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 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 of Insurer:

Address:

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 Section 10 – 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 C

Risk Assessment Record

..... Village Hall

Assessor:

Area:

Date:

Persons at Risk:

| Hazard | Frequency + Severity = Risk Rating |
|--------|------------------------------------|
|--------|------------------------------------|

1.

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3.

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4.

5.

A Risk Rating of 5 or more requires further action

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

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5.

Further Action and Recommendations

Risk Rating Scores

Probable Frequency

Severity

Date reported to management committee:

1. Improbable

1. Trivial Injuries

2. Possible

2. Minor Injuries

3. Occasional

3. Major injury to one person

4. Frequent

4. Major injuries to many people

5. Regular

5. Death of one person

6. Common

6. Multiple deaths

Review Date:

Appendix C

Risk assessments in village halls - example of hazards

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 |

| Area | Hazards |
|-------------|--|
| Toilets | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. slipping on wet floor2. cleaning materials |
| Maintenance | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. falls from ladders2. working alone3. electric shock from appliances4. incorrect moving of heavy items (e.g. furniture) |
| Stores | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. badly stacked equipment2. 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 loose2. stage edges not clearly visible |

For illustration only - make up your own list for your own hall

Appendix C

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 check this monthly and any non-compliant items should be dealt with and reported to the next committee meeting, 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 D

Sample checklist/log of equipment testing

| Area | Date | Action Needed | Tick when done |
|------|------|---------------|----------------|
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Appendix E

Sample Notices

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 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 F - Example of a village hall accident form

General details of incident

Date of incident: Time of incident:

Exact location of incident:

Which organisation 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 committee) | <input type="checkbox"/> contractor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> employee of another organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> member of general public attending management 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

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.....

What was injured person doing at time of the incident?

.....
.....

Was this something they were authorised to do? (If applicable)

Yes No

Were they authorised to be where the incident occurred? (If applicable)

Yes No

By whom was it reported?

.....

Was this incident witnessed by someone else?

Yes No

Details (if applicable)

.....
.....

Was first aid given on site?

Yes No

Details (if applicable)

.....
.....

Was hospital treatment obtained?

Yes No

Details (if applicable)

.....
.....

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:

.....