

Buxton Methodist Church

Fire Safety Risk Assessment

This fire safety risk assessment has been completed based on the processes outlined in BRE Global publication "Fire Safety and Security in places of Worship" published 2009. It is subject to review and updating from time to time.

The responsible body on behalf of Buxton Methodist Church is the Church Council, which act as the Managing Trustees. The Superintendent Minister is the chair of the Church Council. The Church Council has appointed the Church Property Committee to deal with premises matters on its behalf.

The Church Property Committee has appointed Mr Ronald Sinclair to act as a responsible person (RP) in relation to safety matters, including fire safety.

This Fire Safety Risk Assessment should be read in conjunction with the Buxton Methodist Church Generic Risk Assessment provided as information to all users of the premises.

Fire emergency plans

Each church group is responsible for appointing a leader who will act in the event of an emergency, and for formulating any necessary documentation in relation to their particular group. In respect of church services, the church stewards are responsible for implementing a policy relating to evacuation of the worship area. A minimum of one steward is always present, responsible for opening and closing the building. At least one further steward is in attendance at all major services.

Each hirer of the premises is responsible for implementing the requirements in the document headed "Buxton Methodist Church - Information for Users of the Premises". This document indicates the extent to which users need to plan for an emergency, including dealing with escape routes and allocating an assembly area.

Building capacity

Account has been taken of the recommendations for multiple escape routes and width of doorways. Both the hall and the church worship area have escape facilities for up to 200 people. This number is based, as required, on one of the three fire exits not being available. Neither space is likely to approach this number in normal use. Upper floor and lower floor rooms have escape facilities for up to 100 people. Neither space is likely to approach this number in normal use. (Two staircases are available from the upper room and two escape directions are available from the lower room, on entering the lower corridor.)

Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting is provided throughout the building and is checked for operation on a regular basis. Some emergency fittings are "maintained", where an escape route is not otherwise adequately lit, in order to cater for the situation where an emergency has occurred, but the power supply has not been isolated, therefore emergency lighting not switching on. A routine testing protocol is in operation.

Fire alarm

As detailed in the Generic Risk Assessment, "Break Glass type" call points are fitted at all final exits from the building (the legal requirement), and additional points and smoke alarms are fitted elsewhere as thought appropriate. The system is mains powered with a battery back-up, with the control unit in the side entrance hall between the church and the hall. The system is routinely checked once a week by the caretaking staff, initiating a trial call at each manual call point in turn, one per week. The system is checked throughout on a yearly basis by the contractor that fitted the system and a new certificate issued

Fire Fighting Equipment

Fire extinguishers are provided throughout the building in accordance with current recommendations. They are maintained under contract. Occupants of the building are encouraged to use the extinguishers, if necessary, but only when it is safe to do so, and without endangering themselves.

Compartmentalisation

Because of the nature of the building and its development over many years, there is inherent compartmentalisation:

Church Worship Area

Boiler Room (cellar off hall under church sanctuary)

Hall and Upper Room

Chapel Street entrance lobby and stair tower

Coffee lounge and kitchen

Lower rooms and Corridor

Care has been taken to ensure that any cable or pipe ducts between compartments are sealed.

Unwarranted Combustible Material

Other than curtains in the hall and carpets in other spaces, there is little immediately flammable material in terms of permanent furnishings. Most of the fittings in the kitchen are stainless steel.

The caretakers have instructions to remove any material that has not been properly stored, or might impede the exit routes.

Candles

As a church, use is made of candles. Matches used to light candles are stored out of sight. All candles are properly located, and unlikely to fall over. Policy is that candles are not left alight when the building is unsupervised.

This assessment updated 16th July 2023

Prepared by Ronald Sinclair for presentation to, and confirmation by, the Property committee, on behalf of the Church Council.