



HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT UPDATED JANUARY 2019

Introduction

*"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care ... " 1 Peter 5v2
"Be ready to do whatever is good ... " Titus 3v1*

The Scriptures enjoin church leaders to set the highest example in caring for each other and in the stewardship of our environment. Our attitude to health and safety flows from this.

The Policy

The Connexion's general policy, so far as is reasonably practicable, is to provide and maintain safe and healthy work conditions for all members of our congregations, our employees and volunteers as well as contractors and other members of the public who enjoy our services. The Connexion will provide safe equipment and systems of work, information, training and supervision as is needed for this purpose.

AMD 2019 This policy includes updates in relation to publicly available information, insurance bulletins and the effect of CIO status for some Churches which are part of the Connexion. In addition, Connexion guidance documents "Fixed Outdoor Adventure and Playground equipment" and "ASBESTOS IN BUILDINGS – Reminder of responsibilities and risks" are now incorporated on this document.

The safety of children and vulnerable adults in relation to abuse is dealt with in a separate policy.

Review

The policy and its implementation will be reviewed periodically, at least every 5 years, the result of the review recorded in trustee minutes and any changes circulated to the member churches. (This updated to the 2016 document was discussed and agreed at the trustees meeting in January 2019).

Policy Implementation

The responsibilities of The Connexion trustees and church leaders for the implementation of this policy is set out below. A copy of this policy is to be posted at each member church's premises and brought to the attention of church members at annual church meetings or similar opportunities.

AMD 2019 CIO status: Where a Connexion church is a CIO (has its own elected trustees and organization), the CIO trustees are strongly advised to adopt the policies laid out in the following paragraphs in full.

Signed on behalf of The Connexion Trustees

Date

Implementation of the Policy by The Connexion Trustees.

The trustees will:

- Keep the policy up to date, particularly in the light of changes in legislation. Arrange to receive information on health and safety issues that are relevant to churches and circulate appropriate information to the member churches.
- Have Health and Safety as a regular item on trustee meetings
- Monitor the implementation of the policy by member churches
- Ensure that where they are directly responsible for local Connexion activities (for example Conferences) that the arrangements are to standards equivalent to those expected of local churches in the following paragraph.

Implementation of the Policy by the local church leadership

The local church leadership will:

- Appoint someone locally to be responsible for Health and Safety issues, to be familiar with the Health and Safety Regulations as far as they affect church premises and to put in place local arrangements for Health and Safety.
- Ensure that the Health and Safety policy and arrangements are observed
- Ensure that the church premises are clean and tidy and the grounds are safely maintained.
- Ensure that safe access and egress is maintained
- Ensure adequate fire-fighting equipment is available and maintained
- Ensure that any safety equipment and clothing provided is used and that all plant, equipment and tools are properly maintained and that the operators have had appropriate training.
- Ensure that food hygiene regulations and procedures are observed
- Assess the risks to Health and Safety locally and take action to eliminate or minimize those risks.
- Ensure members of the congregation and others affected are aware of the safety policy and the actions they are responsible for to maintain safety.

Responsibility of Employees and voluntary workers

Employees and voluntary workers have a responsibility to cooperate in the implementation of this policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others whilst on church business.

Therefore they should:

- Comply with any safety rules and procedures
- Use any protective clothing and equipment (PPE) required

- Report faults in equipment
- Report all accidents, injuries or other potential hazards as soon as possible
- Not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

Local Arrangements for Health and Safety

The arrangements for Health and Safety will differ from church to church. Therefore, each church is expected to address the following example issues in the way that is most effective locally:

- Accidents and First aid. Fire Safety. Electrical Safety. Gas Equipment Safety. Hazardous substances handling. Safety of Plant and Machinery. Slips trips and falls - conditions of floors, steps and paths, lighting, working at high levels, preparation of food, manual handling – lifting, carrying and moving food, display screen equipment, hazardous buildings, personal safety, risk assessments,
- Contractors (Certain work on buildings is subject to The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 and later amendments.)
- Guidance on these topics and how to carry out risk assessments is contained in "Church Health and Safety Policy with guidance notes" which has been circulated to all churches. Further copies are available from Ecclesiastical, Beaufort House, Brunswick Road, Gloucester, GL1 1JZ. <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-health-and-safety/>
- *AMD 2019 As ansvar are the current Connexion insurers, their guidance document "Church Health and Safety – Risk management guidance notes" should be referred to for guidance in the first instance. A up- to date copy can be requested from ansvar.*
- The trustees recommend that , in the first instance, each church works through the above topics using these guidance notes.
- Other issues may crop up not dealt with in this type of guidance - so think widely. For example, road safety can often be an important issue for churches close to busy roads.
- Local arrangements for Health and Safety should be clearly communicated to those affected preferably in writing, signed by the local leadership, and reviewed at suitable intervals.

AMD 2019 - Incorporation of notes on outdoor play equipment bulletin 2015

Fixed Outdoor Adventure and Playground equipment

To ensure that any fixed outdoor adventure and children's playground equipment at the **premises** is:

- inspected annually by an independent specialist if the various items of equipment are in a specifically designed and purpose-built children's play area, and
- inspected at least monthly by an authorised and suitably trained **employee**, and
- maintained in a safe and good condition (any equipment found to be in need of any repair, defective or unsafe in any way must be prevented from being used until the maintenance, repair or improvement work has been carried out), and
- a written record is retained by **you** for each inspection and following any appropriate maintenance, repair or improvement work.

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The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) can provide advice and information on playground management and the safety of outdoor play areas. Their Code of Good Practice for Play Areas covers Siting, Design, Equipment, Surfacing, Installation, Ancillary items, Signs and Management. Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents: www.rosipa.com

AMD 2019 Incorporation of notes on Asbestos in Buildings

Asbestos in Buildings – Reminder of responsibilities and risks

(The following comments are intended as introductory notes and are not intended to be a complete or qualified guide to the subject. Full and current guidance is available on the Government website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos>)

Asbestos was once thought of as a wonder building material for insulation and structural work, fireproofing and so forth. Only sadly by experience was it found to be very dangerous. People who have worked with or had been exposed to asbestos have a high risk of developing Asbestosis (Mesothelioma). After being exposed to asbestos, Mesothelioma symptoms can take 20 – 50 years to appear.

Building Surveys

In 2016 the Trustees commissioned surveys of the buildings (Owned by the Connexion) to follow up 2004 reports to review condition but also to include other aspects of the building – It's use and layout as apparent at the time of the visit, to look at Health and Safety and fire escape issues.

The 2016 surveys were an "intrusive" inspection of building structure in the reporting cycle. To determine whether Asbestos is present in a building is intrusive. Samples will have to be taken and sent to a laboratory and a report issued. For the very risks involved in carrying out such surveys, they are only via approved surveyors and the Connexion has employed such in the past prior to work being carried out on it's property, for example The Springs Manse prior to restoration work.

So what is the guidance? Here is an extract from the government's website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/duty.htm>):

"Here are some basic principles to consider when managing asbestos: (extract from page)

- Asbestos is only dangerous when disturbed. If it is safely managed and contained, it doesn't present a health hazard
- Don't remove asbestos unnecessarily - removing it can be more dangerous than leaving it in place and managing it

- Not all asbestos materials present the same risk. The measures that need to be taken for controlling the risks from materials such as pipe insulation are different from those needed in relation to asbestos cement
- If you are unsure about whether certain materials contain asbestos, you should presume they do and treat them as such
- Remember that the duty to manage is all about putting in place the practical steps necessary to protect maintenance workers and others from the risk of exposure to asbestos fibres - it is not about removing all asbestos”

Therefore in regard to church maintenance work if there is any concern about risk, expert advice must be sought before starting the work.

For intrusive building work, the Trustees mandate that this is only carried out by a qualified contractor, following regulations, so that neither he nor his employees, or any member of the public is endangered by exposure to Asbestos. Any Qualified Contractor working in a building will be fully aware of the Asbestos regulations in regard to safety and will normally ask for a report to be carried out or to view information on an Asbestos survey that has been independently carried out on the building. Legislation and guidance is clear and information is readily available. Issue 16/10/2017.

January 2019 main document end

Appendix A – added January 2019

Physical works to Connexion Property – discussion of risks, policy January 2019

Major works to Connexion property

(Including any work on sites where there is uncontrolled access by the public, for example street frontage and high-level works where there may be risk to adjacent property or other significant factor determined by a site risk assessment)

Such works should only be carried out by appropriately qualified and insured contractors who will take over responsibility for the site / building zone for the duration of the works and will implement appropriate site safety according to industry regulations current at the time.

The contractor is responsible for the safety of visitors to the site and should it be necessary for a member of the local church management team to review any matter on site, PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) must be worn as directed.

Repairs to Connexion property

(Work on the property where this is within the site boundary and there are no risks to the public and adjacent properties)

Where property is undergoing repairs or renewals by a builder or other trade, the tradesperson/manager shall implement appropriate health and safety measures in line with the type of work being carried out in order to satisfy the local management team that the requirements of the Connexion Health and Safety policy document have been met.

If at any stage in the work the local management team is advised that problems have been encountered that render the works unsafe, the local management team shall in the first instance take measures to ensure the safety of all persons on site and then inform the

trustees concerning the problem. The trustees will then obtain a qualified opinion on the matter and instruct accordingly.

Small works to Connexion property

Connexion properties vary in age and scale, from small stand-alone buildings to large churches and manses. The age of properties vary and with the elapse of time, local knowledge of the construction materials used is lost. Therefore, where redecoration or small works that are intrusive to the structure are undertaken, the risk of exposure to hazardous material is higher because of “unknowns”.

To help in our understanding of such problem areas, some risks are discussed in layman terms below:

Lead paints

The use of lead in paints resulted to this being banned in the manufacture of domestic paint many years ago, but note that it may still be found in specialist products. For older buildings, layers of this type of paint may still exist on woodwork and the use of hot air guns/blowlamps for removing old layers create risk, so in such circumstances stripping solutions are safer. Even so protective equipment would need to be used.

Plaster surfaces

For modern buildings, these are most likely to feature walls and ceilings using construction materials where there is minimal risk when sanded for the purposes of painting or penetrated by drilling. The inhalation of dust to operatives and bystanders is still a risk to health and so appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) would again need to be used.

For older buildings, because of the history of construction – in many cases where voluntary effort and donated materials may have been used, there is less certainty. Who knows what may have been mixed in with mortar, and plasters “to aid bonding”? Therefore, in this case sanding and penetration by drilling have greater risk, requiring greater vigilance and further protective measures being required.

Walls and Ceilings with textured coatings

There have been many DIY brands of textured coating available and the compositions less known. However “Artex” was commonly used as a quick and economic solution for patterning walls and ceilings, particularly where there was unevenness in the surface. Until the mid-1980s, the Artex coating was made with white asbestos to strengthen it. Therefore, old Artex manufactured by Artex Ltd. will contain asbestos while Artex coatings applied after 2000 may or may not contain asbestos.

So in such cases the surfaces must be assumed to contain asbestos and the procedures outlined in the Connexion Health and Safety policy document (Asbestos in buildings – reminders of responsibilities and risks) must be applied.

Ceiling and floor tiles

PVC and other floor tiles (were often nicknamed “Marley” tiles at the time) may contain Asbestos. Commercial ceiling tiles that were often used on large ceilings and may have been employed in churches similarly may contain Asbestos. Removal of such will require specialist advice and the procedures outlined in the Connexion Health and Safety policy document (Asbestos in buildings – reminders of responsibilities and risks) must be applied.

Timber Constructions and use of MDF board

Softwood dust is known to be hazardous. MDF board is commonly used for making cupboards, partitions and other items as DIY projects in churches. There is less awareness of the effects of this dust where in fact formaldehyde is released. When working with the material, it is important to manage the dust produced from cutting, planing and sanding – both for operatives and bystanders. Appropriate PPE must be used and the working area zoned off.

This government document discusses the risks, this will extend the understanding of the reader. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/woodworking/faq-mdf.htm> contain that dust dust

Extract: *“Under current legislation softwood dust, hardwood dust and formaldehyde are considered to be hazardous to health. Both softwood and hardwood dusts are known to be respiratory sensitisers and may cause asthma and other respiratory problems. Hardwood dust can also cause a rare form of nasal cancer.”*

Summary and policy

It will be clear, even from the limited areas discussed above that the management of risk in regard to any work in or on buildings is of the highest priority. The application of “DIY” knowledge and equipment appropriate to working in a domestic property will be seen to be insufficient.

Therefore, the use of contractors to carry out work is the preferred and safest option as they will have participated in industry training and be compliant with current legislation. In addition, they will be insured to a satisfactory level, apply site health and safety and have PPE appropriate to the task being undertaken. They will have management responsibility for the site, whereas local church management by default is unlikely to have the necessary training and knowledge.

Should the local church management wish to manage and implement a set of works, this will be limited to “Small works to Connexion property” and a risk assessment must be carried out prior to the work commencing and then followed by practical Health and Safety measures during the work. The risk assessment must be approved by a competent person (who may be a member of the church) or by external consultancy - The Connexion retain a relationship with Rands Associates for this purpose, though cost will be the responsibility of the local church.

Should the local church benefit from “in house contractors” – (advantageous pricing or by virtue of membership of the church), the contractor shall still retain responsibility for Health and Safety for the works as described in “Repairs to Connexion property” above.

January 2019 Appendix A document end

