

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN CHURCHYARDS

Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) have a responsibility to ensure that the churchyard is as safe as is reasonably practicable and to seek to stop accidents from happening. They must also comply with appropriate legislation, maintain records and thereby be in a position to defend claims if needed.

Risk assessment is a useful tool for assessing the likelihood and severity of a hazard and identifying risks that must receive priority attention. It also provides a good record of churchyard hazards and the safety measures being implemented. Risk assessments should also be undertaken if the PCC or a group are running a churchyard event or work party.

How to carry out a risk assessment

Systematically look at each area of the churchyard. Assess paths railings and steps, trees, gravestones, equipment and hazardous substances. If you are carrying out a risk assessment for an event or work party you also need to think about the risks associated with the activities that will happen on the day.

To calculate a risk rating, you need to grade both the **likelihood** and **severity** from 1 to 3. The grades are then multiplied together to give a risk rating.

The **likelihood** of something happening can be graded as:

- 1=Low (seldom or unlikely to occur)
- 2=Medium (frequently or likely to occur)
- 3=High (certain or almost certain to occur)

The **severity** of injury if something does happen can be graded as:

- 1=Low (e.g. minor cuts and bruises)
- 2=Medium (serious injury)
- 3=High (fatality or a number of persons seriously injured)

Having assessed both the **likelihood** and **severity**, a risk rating can be calculated by multiplying the likelihood with the severity. This will give a rating from 1 to 9.

Likelihood

1	1	2	3
2	2	4	6
3	3	6	9
	1	2	3

Severity

Those with a score of 1-2 are low priority, 3-4 are medium priority and 6-9 are high priority.

With low priority no action at all may be required. With high priority it may be necessary to stop the activity, or restrict access to the area, until safety measures have been put in place.

You need to note the safety measures that will reduce the risks as far as possible. Safety measures for hazards can include restricting access, eliminating the risk, using personal protective equipment and using safe systems of work.

Risk Assessment form (General)

Name of church:

Address:

Assessment undertaken by:

Date:

Review date:

Area assessed:

If applicable date of event/work party being assessed:

Under additional controls you should note the safety measures that are needed to reduce the risk to an acceptable level and record when they have been implemented. Then you can calculate the new risk rating which should be at an acceptable level.

Hazard/Risks	Existing Controls	Likelihood L	Severity S	Risk Rating LXS	Additional Controls	New Risk Rating (after additional controls are implemented)

For specific advice on particular risks and hazards contact your insurers For specific information on memorials contact the National Association of Memorial Masons, 1 Castle Mews Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 2XI Tel. 01788 542264 enquiries@namm.org.uk, www.namm.org.uk

For any other help and information contact Caring for God's Acre
Tel: 01568 611154, info@cfga.fsnet.co.uk www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk