



Name of Policy: Health & Safety Policy	Approved By: River Church Trustees
Date Last Updated: Jan 2025	Review Date: Jan 2026

RIVER CHURCH

Health & Safety Policy Manual

Note – Safeguarding is not included within this manual

January 2025

Contents

Health & Safety Policy Statement	3
Responsibilities.....	5
Communication	7
Risk Assessments	7
Accidents Incidents and Emergencies	8
First Aid	9
Reporting Health and Safety Hazards.....	11
Manual Handling	11
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).....	12
Display Screen Equipment (DSE)	14
Fire Safety and Prevention	15
Electricity at Work	16
Food Safety.....	17
Work at Height	17
Pregnant Staff.....	18
Lone Working	18
Working from Home	20
Safety & Security within the Premises	20
Transport and Driving	21
Mental Health and Wellbeing.....	22
Mobile Telephones	24
Work Equipment.....	24
Environmental Policy	25
Using External Venues.....	25
Events	26
Young Persons, Students and Volunteers in the Workplace	27
Training & Development	27
Legionella	28
Asbestos.....	28
Contractors.....	28

Health & Safety Policy Statement

River Church is committed to ensuring the Health, Safety and Welfare of its staff as far as is reasonably practicable. As an employer River Church has clear responsibilities placed upon it under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and other applicable Regulations.

River Church is committed to ensuring that:

- Statutory health & safety requirements are met.
- Processes and procedures are developed in a safe manner and standards reflect good industry practice.
- River Church locations are safe places of work and have adequate access and egress arrangements.
- Hazards and risks are managed in accordance with current legislation.
- Staff are competent to perform their roles and receive appropriate instruction, training, supervision and information.
- Appropriate communication and consultation with staff on Health & Safety matters takes place.
- Competent persons are appointed to meet Health & Safety requirements including specialists from outside of River Church where appropriate.
- Ensuring a high level of Mental Health & Wellbeing for staff and volunteers

All staff have the following duties:

- To take reasonable care for the Health & Safety of themselves and others that may be affected by their work and actions
- Be familiar with the Health and Safety policy and procedures and their own responsibilities.
- Co-operate with River Church's requirements under its policy and other safety legislation in all matters relating to Health & Safety to enable River Church to comply with its Health and Safety obligations and procedures.
- Report to the appropriate person any hazard, incident, near misses, accident or dangerous occurrence which has caused or may cause injury or damage.
- Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided by River Church in the interests of Health & Safety or Welfare.
- To follow any training and instruction provided by River Church
- To inform the Trustees of any serious and imminent danger.

All staff are encouraged to participate actively in improving health and safety. We have a good health and safety record, but we must not be complacent. We can only achieve and maintain the successful implementation of this policy through the co-operation and support of everyone who works here.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure continuous improvement in River Church's Health & Safety processes and, if necessary, revised to take into account organisational or legislative changes. River Church strives continuously to improve the working environment for its staff by meeting both their needs and the need to provide safe and comfortable premises.

Signed by the Chair of the Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Holt', written in a cursive style.

Date: 21 Jan 2025

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

River Church Board of Trustees carry ultimate responsibility for health and safety in the workplace but have delegated the chair of trustees responsible for the development and implementation of the Health and Safety Policy.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Ensuring River Church has and maintains an up-to-date and relevant Health and Safety Policy.
- Ensuring that a copy of this policy, together with all supplements, is easily available to every member of staff, and that it is fully explained and completely understood by them.
- Making reasonable provision for the appropriate resources to be made available to implement the content of the policy.
- Ensuring that the Board of Trustees considers and reviews issues that affect River Church's Health and Safety Policy.
- Delegation of specific duties with regard to the policy to designated persons as appropriate.
- Ensuring River Church policies and procedures meet the requirement of current legislation and codes of practice.
- Making sure that the necessary resources and arrangements are provided for the implementation of this policy.

Congregational leaders

are responsible for ensuring that this Health & Safety Policy is implemented and complied with within their own areas of responsibility.

- Implementation of this Policy.
- Ensuring that proper consideration is given to health and safety in all decision making and management processes.
- Providing advice, guidance and information on health and safety issues.
- Ensuring that a copy of this policy, together with all supplements, is easily available to every member of staff, and that it is fully explained and completely understood by them.
- Carrying out risk assessments, inspections, reviews and audits (as detailed in the arrangements in this policy) and implementing necessary actions. Identify actual or possible hazards and ensure that proper safety measures are met.
- Providing all, or any necessary warning signs.
- Arranging for health and safety training to be provided to staff.
- Communicating health and safety information as required.
- Appointing sufficient fire marshals/wardens and first aiders.
- Arranging training of first aiders and fire marshals/wardens.
- Establishing and maintaining adequate procedures and facilities for dealing with emergencies, including fire, bomb threats, etc.
- Implementing actions from assessments, inspections, reviews and audits where these relate to issues under the control of facilities management.

- Ensuring that DSE (Display Screen Equipment) assessments are undertaken for all staff once a year and for new staff upon start of employment.
- Ensuring that the accident book records all incidents, accidents and dangerous occurrences, reporting to HSE if necessary.
- Ensuring that all appropriate records are updated and make them available to external regulatory bodies as required.
- Maintaining standards of welfare, providing facilities that are well equipped and fit for purpose including toilets, hot and cold water and enough eating and rest areas.
- Ensuring good general housekeeping.
- Ensuring that all accidents and 'near misses' are investigated and reported to River Church central admin office (who will report to Trustees meetings).
- Ensuring safe meeting places which includes a pre-meeting safety check.
- Ensuring staff, volunteers and church attendees are instructed/informed of safety procedures.
- Ensuring all significant risks have been assessed and are adequately controlled.
- Ensuring staff receive adequate information, training, instruction and supervision on the risks and precautions appropriate to their jobs. Ensure that everyone works in a manner that is safe to themselves and to others.
- Ensuring that equipment and systems are maintained in safe working conditions.

All River Church Staff

All staff are encouraged to participate fully in the management of health and safety for River Church. All staff also have duties as follows:

- Ensuring that they take reasonable care for their own safety and that of other staff and all church attendees.
- Working safely following any information and training provided.
- Fully cooperating with all health and safety requirements.

Promptly report the following to the Admin Office: Hazards and other health and safety issues or problems:

- Accidents, near misses and ill health that are or may be work related.
- Health issues, illnesses, disabilities or other health problems that could affect or be affected by work.

Every employee has a responsibility for ensuring that they undertake the work they are required to do with due regard to the safety of themselves, their colleagues and the general public. Therefore, each employee will be responsible for:

- Being familiar with and conforming to the relevant policy, procedures and safety instructions at all times.
- Co-operating with the Trustees and observing the instructions and advice on safety and health matters.
- Where and when necessary, using protective clothing and equipment.
- Not interfering with or misusing anything which is provided in the interests of safety and health.
- Reporting to the management any incident which may have led to injury or damage.

- Giving all assistance as required in the investigation of accidents.
- Reporting on their whereabouts to River Church office/admin.
- Never leave equipment visible in their cars - especially laptops, mobile phones etc.
- Avoid isolated shortcuts or areas that may pose a risk.
- Park in well-lit and open locations on populated routes.
- Keep a mobile phone in their possession that is suitably charged, and the office has the contact number.
- Report all threats of violence, incidents, potential threats of harm or concerns to the manager.
- Always act in a way as to secure own safety at all times.

Failure by an employee to comply with the aforementioned requirements may be treated as an act of indiscipline and may remove liability from the organisation in the event of an accident.

Persistent breaching of the health and safety arrangements by an employee will, after appropriate warnings, invite disciplinary action. Should staff feel their security, health or safety has been neglected by the organisation, they should take recourse through the organisation's grievance policy and procedures

Communication

The Trustees are committed to ensuring that appropriate communication and consultation with staff on health and safety matters takes place.

The Health and Safety Policy will be displayed wherever possible and suitably communicated to interested parties. It will be communicated with new starters at Induction and all staff will be required to confirm that they have read the Policy on an annual basis.

New information will be communicated via, email, team briefings and training sessions as appropriate.

Risk Assessments

In accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999 risk assessments will be undertaken for all applicable hazards. The risk assessments will be undertaken using HSE Guidance (refer to HSE.gov.uk).

Risk assessments will review the risk posed by the activity, and then apply controls to reduce the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

Some control measures arising from these assessments could be:

- Compiling safe systems of work and communicating these to staff.
- Undertaking health and safety training to staff.
- Undertaking health and safety checks.
- Other specified relevant controls.

Risk Assessments will be communicated to staff and be reviewed on a regular basis, or if there is a material change. A central register of risk assessments will be maintained.

Accidents Incidents and Emergencies

- **An accident** can be defined as an unplanned, unforeseen, and undesired or unwanted event. It may result in someone being injured, something that draws blood or requires the use of first aid materials or requires time off work or something being damaged, or a combination of these. It also includes events that do not necessarily cause injury or damage, but that easily could have. Such events are known as “near miss” events. An ambulance should be called if it is deemed necessary for the casualty to have a formal assessment.
- **An emergency** may be defined as an adverse, untoward incident which may include an accident, which may adversely affect the safety or wellbeing of any employee or visitor or others of whom we owe a duty of care. An ambulance should be called if it is deemed necessary for the casualty to have a formal assessment.

Common types of accident:

- Falling over.
- Back injury whilst carrying out manual handling activity, e.g. moving PA system.
- Knocking oneself against furniture or open doors.
- Cutting oneself in kitchen areas.
- Slips, trips and falls.
- Others.

River Church recognises its responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide working conditions that are safe, healthy and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice.

However, we recognise that accidents are, even in the safest of working environments, from time to time inevitable, despite the best efforts of staff, volunteers and church attendees to prevent them.

- River Church fully complies with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).
- River Church keeps a record of incidents covered by RIDDOR in an Accident Reporting book which is kept at the Admin Office.
- River Church keeps a record of any accident, occupational disease or dangerous occurrence which requires reporting under RIDDOR, and any other occupational accident-causing injuries that result in a worker being away from work or incapacitated for more than three consecutive days (not counting the day of the accident). River Church will report any such injuries if they result in the incapacitation exceeding seven days.
- River Church provides an adequate number of trained First Aiders and ensures that training certificates are current.
- All accidents and incidents should be reported to the Statutory First Aider and Admin Office and recorded appropriately. The Accident or Incident Report Form and any other relevant report or forms must be completed as soon as it is practicably possible.

- Health and Safety (First Aid) regulations 1981 require that River Church ensures all accidents injuries and illnesses in the workplace are recorded in the accident book however trivial they may seem.
- RIDDOR 2013 gives details of types of accidents, incidents and illnesses which must be reported to the HSE and River Church will ensure this is carried out if necessary.
- There is no legal obligation for individuals to report illness or mental health conditions to the Trustees, but it may be unsafe to medicate staff in an emergency.
- The results and recommendations from investigations are fully implemented to prevent any re-occurrence of such incidents.

Such occurrences will be handled by the Statutory First Aider and recorded appropriately to minimise threat and injury to all so that accidents can be minimised in the future and that River Church and its staff can learn from their experiences.

River Church policy on dealing with accidents and emergencies forms part of the induction programme and training for all new staff. Regular refresher and training modules and sessions relating to accidents and emergency situations – Fire Safety, Infection Control, Health and Safety etc will be on-going or at a minimum, annually.

First Aid

Entries in the Accident Book will be reviewed regularly by the Trustees and Admin office to ensure the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) are complied with.

The Admin Office/Trustees will:

- Appoint the number of First Aiders required.
- Ensure that all First Aiders are provided training from a qualified trainer.
- Ensure that all First Aiders are up to date with their training.
- Ensure there is provision of First Aid supplies.
- All such incidents will be investigated by congregational leaders to determine the root cause of the occurrence. Serious incidents will be investigated by the Trustees. This means any incident that occurs while they are working, including while they are travelling for work or working on other sites and any ill health that may be caused or aggravated by work.
- Incidents, accidents and near misses must be recorded in the Accident Book. All such incidents will be investigated by the Trustees to determine the root cause of the occurrence. Serious incidents will also be investigated by the Trustees.

Reporting Incidents and Accidents (RIDDOR)

All incidents, including near miss accidents, must be documented. There is HSE Guidance on this (Reporting Injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences in health and social care) which provides a lot of useful information and this is summarised below. Also, the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk provides even more information

RIDDOR compels River Church to make a formal report to the HSE for the following incidents:

- **Death or specified injury** – All deaths to workers and non-workers must be reported if they arise from a work-related incident. Suicides are not reportable as the death does not relate from a work-related accident.
- Examples of specified reportable Injuries include:
 - Fracture other than to fingers, thumbs and toes.
 - Any injury likely leading to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight.
 - Any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs.
 - Serious burns covering more than 10% of the body, or damaging the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs.
 - Any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia.
 - Any other injury arising from in an enclosed space which leads to hypothermia or heat induced illness or requiring resuscitation or admission to hospital for more than 24 hours.
- **An injury over seven days;** where an injury results in an individual being away from work or unable to perform their normal range of duties for more than seven days (not including the day of the accident) but includes weekends.
- **Reportable Diseases:** there is a list of reportable occupational diseases, refer to the HSE guidance for the list.
- **Dangerous occurrences:** something that does not result in a reportable injury but clearly could have. There are a wide range of dangerous occurrences, included below are the ones that could be possible within the office.
 - Collapse, overturning or failure of load bearing parts of a lift or lifting equipment.
 - Equipment coming into contact with overhead powerlines.
 - Explosion or fire causing suspension of normal working for more than 24 hours.

If any of these situations occur, staff should report them immediately to the Trustees and a report should be written by the Congregational leader following the HSE guidelines.

In cases of **accidents and near misses *not required to be reported*** to the HSE, staff must fill in a brief report, within 2 days but preferably immediately, in the Incident/Accident Book.

The attention of the Trustees should be drawn to the incident and will trigger the Admin Office/Trustees to conduct a risk assessment of the incident in question. Addressing any necessary action as a result of the incident or the risk assessment is the responsibility of the Trustees and should be incorporated into the risk management structure and systems.

Note: Fatal accidents, specified injuries, reportable injuries and dangerous occurrences must be reported immediately at the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/riddor by telephone to the enforcing authority by the Chair of The Trustees of River Church or their nominated deputy and followed up by the appropriate form.

At the HSE website you will be asked to complete an online version of form F2508 or F2508A. Notification forms should be completed by the Chair of the Trustees, their deputy or by a senior member of staff as soon as possible after the accident. Copies of the completed form should be kept.

There is a legal requirement that written records of reportable accidents and dangerous occurrences (i.e. those which must be reported to the appropriate enforcing authority) be kept for a minimum of three years.

It is the policy of the organisation that all records for recorded incidents should include:

- (a) the date, time and place of incident that occurred.
- (b) the name, address and job of the injured or ill person.
- (c) details of the injury/illness and what first aid was given.
- (d) what happened to the person immediately afterwards.
- (e) the name and signature of the first aider or person dealing with or witnessing the incident.

Reporting Health and Safety Hazards

Environmental

All staff should be familiar with risk assessment categories and remain constantly vigilant for any hazard in their day-to-day working. Should they notice any possible **ENVIRONMENTAL** hazard, it should be reported to the Trustees.

Occupational

Any **OCCUPATIONAL** hazard concerns should be written and reported to Trustees. Where possible Trustees should be informed verbally, or the issue raised in the team / management meetings.

Manual Handling

River Church seeks to eliminate manual handling operations as far as is reasonably practicable.

Where a manual handling operation cannot be eliminated a Risk Assessment will be undertaken and risks will be reduced to the lowest extent reasonably practicable.

Information, instruction and training is provided to staff to minimise the risk of injury due to manual handling. Suitable mechanical lifting aids will be provided as is practical.

Good Lifting Technique:

To reduce the risk of injury due to manual handling, the following practical guidance should be considered by all staff:

- Work areas should be kept in good condition, free from slipping and tripping hazards with clear access to the load.

- Wherever straightforward, loads will be split into smaller loads to reduce the likelihood of injury.
- Loads (any weight) that are large enough to obscure vision, must not be carried manually. They should be placed on trolleys or wheeled cases as necessary and pulled so that the operator has a clear view of the route.
- Loads of more than half the weight of the person lifting it may cause the individual to lose balance and will only be lifted with assistance.
- Ensure, where possible, loads delivered from outside the offices are marked with sufficient information to facilitate safe handling. If not visible on the outside of the load this should appear on the paperwork.
- Use lifting aids such as trolleys etc or use multiple person lifts.



HSE Manual Handling Maximum Load Guidance (These are guidelines and not legal limits)

Height of Lift	Arms Extended	Arms Bent at Elbow
Full height	5 kg	10 kg
Shoulder height	10 kg	20 kg
Elbow height	15 kg	25 kg
Knuckle height	10 kg	20 kg
Mid/lower leg height	5 kg	10 kg

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

River Church will at all times seek to use substances that pose minimal hazards to the health and safety of its staff. Where appropriate, COSHH data sheets will be obtained for substances likely to pose a significant hazard and a Risk Assessment will be undertaken to determine the likely risks involved.

The COSHH Regulations aim to protect people who come into contact with hazardous substances as part of their work. Under COSHH every employer must, by law, ensure that the exposure of staff to substances hazardous to health is either prevented or, where this is not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled.

River Church believes that staff within the organisation should be as safe as possible from the threat of harm through coming into contact with chemicals or other dangerous substances and that the best way to ensure this state of safety exists is to comply with the law as set out the **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)**.

‘Hazardous substances’ include:

- Substances or mixtures of substances classified as dangerous to health under the Classification, Labelling and Packaging Regulations (CLP) including chemicals classified as very toxic, toxic, harmful, irritant or corrosive, such as bleaches and cleaning agents.
- Any substances which have been assigned a maximum exposure limit or occupational exposure standard (as listed in the Health and Safety Executive’s publication EH40 – Occupational Exposure Limits)
- Substantial concentrations of airborne dust.
- Harmful micro-organisms.

To comply with COSHH River Church will:

- Ensure that the exposure of staff (or anyone else) in the Church to hazardous or potentially hazardous substances is minimised and adequately controlled in all cases.
- Ensure that a COSHH risk assessment is carried out of all work in the organisation that involves exposure to hazardous substances as defined above. Ensure that COSHH assessments are reviewed and performed regularly or whenever there is a substantial modification to the work process.
- Ensure that all staff who come into contact with or have to use hazardous substances in their work receive comprehensive and adequate training and information and are issued with appropriate protective clothing and equipment.

All COSHH risk assessments should be made using five steps and after reviewing the safety data sheet for each substance:

1. Identify hazardous substances in the workplace.
2. Identify risks associated with those substances.
3. Decide what can be done to minimise the risks.
4. Record the findings/actions.
5. Keep the findings of risk assessments on file.

All COSHH assessments should be based on the manufacturers and suppliers’ safety guidance which accompanies most products.

Further information: www.coshh-essentials.org.uk

The website includes a step-by-step risk assessment process and provides advice on good practice controls for common tasks and also provide other guidance such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplementary control advice e.g. S100 COSHH essentials: Harm via skin and eye contact.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

River Church will comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 in assessing the risks to users associated with display screen equipment.

- Every employee will undertake a self-assessment in a standard format at least bi-annually or upon employment of their homeworking workstation.
- Equipment including furniture is regularly maintained and replaced as necessary.
- Health risks associated with computers include those associated with poor posture and repetitive strain injuries. Users are encouraged to take regular breaks and not to remain static for too long.
- Permanent staff at River Church are offered a contribution to the cost of an eye test up to £20 in any one year. In addition, a contribution of up to £50 will be made to the cost of new glasses/lenses if required. These glasses are then regarded as PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)
- Identified remedial measures will be implemented by Trustees as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Safe use of DSE equipment posters will be provided where applicable.

Various ill effects such as eyestrain, headaches and upper limb disorders, have been associated with jobs involving the use of display screens. Some of the methods that employers can take to prevent problems are:

- Carrying out an assessment of the equipment and task and making any necessary improvements.
- Providing height-adjustable seats, with back rests and footrests if needed.
- Allowing plenty of room for movement.
- Maintaining and selecting equipment, software and screen options to minimise flicker and reduce eye strain.
- Planning work to allow for breaks.
- Reducing stress levels.
- Reducing noise distractions.
- Providing appropriate training and information.
- Arranging eye tests for certain staff.

Staff can also help to prevent health problems by:

- Sitting comfortably at the correct height with forearms parallel to the surface of the desktop and eyes level with the top of the screen.
- Maintaining good posture.
- Avoiding repetitive and awkward movements by using a copy holder and keeping frequently used items within easy reach.
- Changing positions regularly.
- Using a good keyboard and mouse technique with wrists straight and not using excessive force.
- Making sure there are no reflections or glare on screens by checking window blinds etc. and carefully positioning them in relation to sources of light.
- Adjusting the screen controls to prevent eyestrain.
- Keeping the screen clean.

- Reporting to the Trustees any problems associated with use of the equipment.

Fire Safety and Prevention

River Church strongly believes that staff and visitors of River Church should be as safe as possible from the threat of fire or from injury in the case of an outbreak of fire. It is essential to have robust fire policies and procedures in place, to ensure that staff are well trained to cope with an outbreak of fire or an alarm and to ensure that competent persons are in place in accordance with the law.

The Trustees are jointly responsible with the Church Leaders for the following:

- To ensure that all locations that are hired by the Church have suitable Fire Risk Assessments in place to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Making sure that there are suitable evacuation procedures in place including for any vulnerable persons.
- To ensure that arrangements are in place for all fire equipment at hired premises is suitably maintained.
- To minimise risks such as ensuring escape routes are clear, fire exit doors are not blocked, fire doors are kept closed and all flammables that are on site are kept to a minimum and stored safely.

On the Discovery of or Suspicion of a Fire:

Staff should remain as calm as possible.

- The first person aware of the fire or on the scene should raise the alarm immediately by operating the nearest break-glass call point or by shouting "fire".
- If the suspicion is raised by seeing smoke coming from under a door or by seeing smoke in a closed room **STAFF SHOULD ON NO ACCOUNT ATTEMPT TO OPEN THE DOOR** but should raise the alarm and summon the Fire Service as quickly as possible.
- Commence the evacuation procedure below.

In the Event of a Fire or the Fire Alarm Sounding:

- Evacuate the building immediately and go to the nearest designated fire assembly point as stated in the fire action notice.
- Remain as calm as possible and help any visitors, disabled persons or contractors on the premises to evacuate.
- Where possible and safe to do so, check all rooms (in particular toilets) to ensure no visitors or staff remain in them or are trapped.
- Close all doors and ensure that any person not accounted for is immediately reported to the appropriate person such as a Congregational Leader or directly to a Fire Service officer.

NEVER:

- NEVER stop to collect valuables or possessions.
- NEVER use lifts. Evac chairs may need to be used to evacuate any vulnerable persons who may struggle in the event of an evacuation (training will be provided)
- NEVER open doors where they can see smoke coming through unless that is the only means of escape.
- NEVER attempt to re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so by a competent person or by a Fire Service officer.

In the event of a Fire Summary:

The fire alarm will sound

1. Dial 999 for the Fire Service immediately.
2. One Member of Staff should investigate the Zone of the Fire.
3. The other Staff on duty and Church attendees (with aid from staff as applicable) should make their way to the identified Assembly Point.
4. On finding a Fire, evacuate the immediate vicinity.
5. On arriving, the Fire Service should be able to enter the building immediately.
6. You should be able to tell them where the Fire is and if anyone is trapped.

Evacuation:

On hearing the Fire Alarm, Church attendees and Staff should leave what they are doing and proceed immediately to the nearest Fire Assembly Point. An evacuation plan of vulnerable persons to be put in place.

Staff will provide support and be further guided by the appointed competent person in planning their response to the evacuation and meeting the needs of the Fire Service.

Electricity at Work

River Church recognises that electricity can present a significant hazard in the workplace and is committed to reduce the consequent risks as far as possible.

The Trustees must ensure that Electrical installation inspections by the venues are carried out every five years with an inspection of 100% of the system. Records will be maintained. The Provision and Use of Work equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) require the employer to select suitable work equipment and to ensure that work equipment is maintained in a good state in efficient working order and in good repair. To comply fully with these regulations Trustees will ensure the following:

- Suitable instruction and training is provided to any person using electrical equipment especially for higher risk activities like setting up the PA system.

- A Portable appliance test will be carried out on an annual basis by a competent person. (although annual testing is not required legally it is best practice)
- That all equipment is suitable for its intended use.
- That all equipment is regularly maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or legal obligation.
- That potential hazards are identified by risk assessment and either removed or minimised.
- All persons working with electrical equipment should check the condition of wiring, cabling, plugs etc. connected to equipment they use and report any faults or damage to Church leaders and that the item is taken out of serviced/labelled.
- All persons should ensure that electrical equipment is kept clean and away from any liquids and moisture.

Food Safety

Whenever food is served by River Church, appropriate control measures will be applied. All food will be adequately labelled and warnings will be provided for the risk of Allergies. High hygiene standards will be followed whenever food is served.

Church Leaders, as part of their Risk Assessments for the preparation of food, whether for on-site or off-site activities, should also ensure that:

- We ensure that we follow the appropriate regulations governing the preparation and storage of foodstuffs.
- We ensure that all food handlers have received adequate supervision, instruction and training.
- All food is sourced from suitable providers such as reputable supermarkets.
- We ensure that the appropriate assessment of risk is carried out for the foods to be prepared and stored including storage at the correct temperatures.
- Before any preparation commences, all surfaces coming into contact with food must be washed down and disinfected.
- We ensure that all hirers who wish to provide foodstuffs are advised of the facilities and procedures.
- Higher risk food for food poisoning or choking will not be served.

Work at Height

All work at height is to be avoided wherever possible and must be subject to a risk assessment and method statement. Any staff using work at height equipment such as platforms, ladders and step ladders must sign the risk assessment and method statement and receive training on their safe use. All work at height equipment should be subject to a suitable inspection regime. This should be pre use and at periodic intervals. If any defects are found it should not be used and be taken out of commission.

It is important that any work at height equipment is used on firm, flat and smooth surfaces.

Use of Step Ladders:

- Stepladders should have handholds if the top of the ladder is going to be used.
- Never use damaged stepladders.
- Never have one foot on the stepladder and the other on another object - both feet on stepladder.
- Never stand on top handrail.
- Never stand on cross bracings.
- Never have more than one person on the stepladder.
- Never exert sideways pressure.
- Never use in closed position.
- Never use a stepladder to access greater heights.
- Ensure stepladder is of sufficient height for the job.
- Wear flat bottomed and firm soled shoes with a heel.
- Ensure firm level base - never use on sloping ground.
- Avoid electrical hazards.
- Do not overreach - lose balance.
- Always use stepladder-facing work.
- Keep a secure grip when climbing up
- Get them footed by someone as appropriate

Pregnant Staff

River Church recognises that pregnant staff are more susceptible to risks in the workplace and will do all that is reasonably practicable to protect the health and safety of both the employee and the unborn child.

A comprehensive Risk Assessment Form has been developed and will be used.

Under management of Health and Safety at Work (1999) an expectant person has a duty to inform their employer they are pregnant.

Trustees, once advised of the pregnancy, must undertake an initial Pregnancy Risk Assessment and implement any necessary identified adjustments. As the pregnancy progresses, further periodic Pregnancy Risk Assessments should be undertaken, and specifically if the employee reports pregnancy related medical conditions or is experiencing symptoms such as tiredness etc. then further actions may be necessary. The Trustees should monitor how the individual is coping with their daily work activities. Additional Risk Assessments to be made as needed and guidance from Occupational Health maybe needed. A copy of all Risk Assessments undertaken must be sent to the Trustees. A return-to-work Risk Assessment must also be undertaken on return from maternity leave.

Lone Working

River Church acknowledges that it has the duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary. Lone working should be avoided whenever possible. If staff must work alone the Trustees must assess the risks and put in place appropriate measures to ensure the safety of staff.

It is noted that staff who lone work are competent adults and are able to work unsupervised. If there is a staff member with any special needs or medical conditions that may make them more vulnerable to specific hazards, they must advise the Admin Office and Trustees immediately.

Staff who lone work should be issued with a suitable working mobile phone and if applicable a lone working software app is to be used or some kind of lone working alarm. A high level of communication with other colleagues and reporting should be in place.

River Church will assess lone working practices and take steps to prevent or control risk where necessary. Where it is possible, systems will be adopted to avoid staff working alone. In cases where this is not possible the organisation will provide an appropriate level of guidance and support to staff so that they are aware of and comply with best practice in relation to lone working.

River Church aims to ensure that:

- Assessments are carried out for and by all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable.
- Risks from visitors are minimised.
- Communication about potential risk posed is of the highest possible standard.
- River will ensure that Risk Assessments are embedded as good practice.
- River will ensure that an appropriate record of incidents involving lone working are reported.
- River will ensure that lone working is not undertaken during the induction period until a full risk assessment has been carried out.
- Lone staff are not more at risk than other staff.
- River will employ a range of control measures as appropriate to safeguard lone working staff.
- River will take into account a range of potential working situations and other foreseeable emergencies such as accident, illness and violence.
- River will apply the lone working policy to anyone employed by River Church who may be alone.
- River identifies lone staff that are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.

River Church is committed to ensuring staff are adequately trained to enable them to comply with policies and procedures. With regard to Lone Working, River Church will ensure that:

- New staff members will receive basic induction training to ensure staff are aware of lone working good practice.
- Staff can recognise potentially dangerous situations.
- Staff have basic knowledge of de-escalation techniques.
- Staff know how to place themselves in a room to avoid escalating the situation and be able to remove themselves safely.
- Staff understand the importance of quickly and effectively passing on information regarding changing circumstances or behaviour, which could signify a risk.
- All staff can comply with any organisational and statutory requirements relating to the reporting of incidents.

Working from Home

The objective of this working from home procedure is to provide home-based staff with guidelines for safe home-based working practices.

Home-based working is when an employee primarily carries out their role from home; hence their home becomes their work base.

River Church is responsible for providing and maintaining the equipment necessary for home workers use unless they choose to use their own equipment. The equipment continues to be the property of River Church and is insured by the charity. Suitable PAT testing should be in place for electrical equipment such as desktops, laptops etc.

All homeworkers along with office-based staff are required to complete a Display Screen Equipment assessment and homeworker assessment which are to be returned to Trustees. Staff who work at home must ensure that their risk assessments have been carried out and any actions identified have been implemented. The home working environment should meet with HSE guidance to include suitable office furniture, lighting, heating, ventilation etc.

Homeworkers should have access to first aid provision.

Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential.

There should be regular contact with the Admin Office and Trustees or other designated person if working at home for extended periods, and an appropriate reporting-in system should be used if making visits from home.

Safety & Security within the Premises

River Church recognises their responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions that are safe, healthy and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice.

The legal requirement to have a health and safety policy is a direct obligation arising from the **Health and Safety at Work etc, Act 1974**. It requires that every employer with five or more staff must prepare and revise as often as necessary a written health and safety policy for the workplace and must explain the arrangements for putting that policy into force. This policy and any revision must be brought to the notice of staff. The failure to have a written health and safety policy can result in the issue of an improvement notice ordering the matter to be attended to within a fixed period. Non-compliance can result in prosecution and a fine.

River Church is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of our staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, and of all other persons who may be affected by our activities including Church Attendees.

River Church will take the following steps to ensure that its statutory duties are met at all times:

- Each staff member will be given information, instruction and training as is necessary to enable the safe performance of work activities.
- All processes and systems of work will be designed to take account of health and safety and will be properly supervised at all times.
- Adequate facilities and arrangements will be maintained to enable staff to raise issues of health and safety.
- Competent persons appointed to assist in meeting statutory duties including, where appropriate, specialists from outside the Church.
- This document will be regularly monitored to ensure that its objectives are achieved. It will be reviewed and, if necessary, revised in the light of legislative or organisational changes.
- River Church recognises its responsibility under the **Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974** and the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** (MHSWR) to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions which are safe, healthy and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice. Staff, visitors and contractors are expected to abide by safety rules and to have regard to the safety of others at the organisation.

The successful implementation of this policy requires total commitment from all staff.

Each individual has a legal obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and for the safety of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

Transport and Driving

This section sets out River Church's statement in relation to safe and effective driving on charity business, as well as a general statement to encourage more environmentally friendly travel.

Good environmental management is important to River Church. We seek to limit the environmental impact of our business activities and to enhance environmental quality in areas where River Church have influence.

In addition, staff who drive for work related activities must:

- Make sure their vehicle is roadworthy and has up to date servicing and MOT if applicable
- Present their licence and any other documents required for inspection on request by River Church or any nominated third-party contractor who is responsible for managing driving activities.
- Report any medical conditions to River Church which could affect their driving.
- Never drive tired or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Never drive faster than conditions safely allow and obey posted speed limits at all times.
- Plan journeys so they can be completed at safe speeds and without exceeding speed limits.
- Take breaks if tired, and as a matter of good practice, should not drive continuously for more than two and a half hours without at least a 15-minute break.
- Plan breaks and break locations in advance of starting the journey whenever possible. Be alert at all times when driving

Mental Health and Wellbeing

River Church as an employer is committed to the well-being and mental health of their staff and volunteers. This procedure confirms the commitment to ensuring that measures are taken to achieve wellbeing in the workforce will be fair, equitable and reasonable.

This procedure will be used to guide River Church in supporting and maintaining the wellbeing of their staff.

- River Church will commit to its duty of care under current legislation, national frameworks and best practice.
- Trustees & Management will consult, participate and welcome open communication throughout the organisation.
- Opportunities will be provided for staff to maintain and promote their health and wellbeing.
- River Church will aim to reduce contributing factors such as workplace stress on staff and promote wellbeing through effective strategies, procedures and training.
- Occupational wellbeing will be monitored regularly.

An Occupational Health service is available, which includes individual health screening to advice on return-to-work plans for any staff returning after a period of absence.

If a staff member believes that their work, or some aspect of it, is affecting their wellbeing they should, speak to their manager. The discussion should cover workload and other aspects of job demands and identify any training needs.

Any discussions between staff members and Occupational Health professionals are confidential, although with the employee's consent, the Occupational Health service will provide a report on the staff members fitness to work, and any recommended reasonable adjustments to the working environment.

River Church will provide help and advice on:

- Mental health and wellbeing including stress management.
- Access to physiotherapy if needed.
- Disability awareness.
- Bullying and harassment.
- Positive cultures.
- Violence and traumatic incidents at work.
- Lifestyle behaviours, with voluntary screening (for example in relation to alcohol, drugs and smoking).
- Physical activity and fitness, such as relaxation classes e.g. yoga.
- Support after serious untoward incidents.

Stress is difficult to define as each person reacts to different stressors in different ways. Individuals also have different thresholds for dealing with stress. The Health and Safety Executive describes workplace stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demands placed on them'. It is important to be able to distinguish between the beneficial effects of reasonable pressure and challenge (that can be stimulating and motivating) and work-related stress, which can be the natural (but distressing) reaction to demands or pressures that the person perceives they cannot cope with at a given time as defined by the Health and Safety Executive.

Managers and staff will discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands on an on-going regular basis. Training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of any organisational change.

River Church will ensure that there is a Mental Health Awareness trained first aider provision available to staff. This will be adequately communicated to staff by notice boards etc.

Peninsula currently provide guidance and helplines for staff to use as appropriate.

Managers will receive suitable mental health awareness training, and this will be made available to employees.

Staff will have regular meetings with their managers to raise any mental health concerns they have or they can raise them with a Mental Health Awareness trained first aider.

Regular awareness of mental health will be provided to employees in the form of communication posters/updates and bulletins etc.

- Build physical activity into your routine, get active, for example, classes and workshops for mindfulness, exercise, or social reasons.
- Eat well.
- Relax.
- Good sleep routine.
- Consider Talking therapies, Counselling, CBT sessions, Eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR).

Policy

- Identify and monitor possible work-related stress element through risk assessments and control measures These will be regularly reviewed.
- Without being unfair, treat staff with stress in the same way as any other occupationally induced health problem.
- Open attitude by management about work or stresses of work.
- Provide appropriate support, consultation and communication.
- Provide training for all managers /deputies and staff in effective management practices.
- Provide support from occupational health and confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- Provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the organisations agreed stress procedures.

Responsibilities

Trustees shall:

- Ensure there is effective communication between the staff and management particularly where there are changes within the organisations and procedures.
- Ensure staff are given training and opportunities to carry out/develop their responsibilities of contractual obligation.
- Monitor workloads of Staff. For example, working hours and holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend meetings/ training as part of good practice in regard to health and safety.
- Ensure that all Staff are aware and follow the organisation's bullying and harassment procedures.
- Offer relevant support to staff who are experiencing stress outside of work e.g. bereavement.

Staff shall:

- Raise any concerns with their manager.
- Attend appointments with Occupational Health, Counsellor and give consent to their GP being contacted.
- River Church as appropriate will have sought specialist advice, guidance or awareness training on stress from external consultants (HR, Occupational Health and Health & Safety).
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress/long term sickness and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Refer staff to occupational health or counselling, where applicable.

Mobile Telephones

Lost or Stolen Mobile Phone

- An employee who is allocated a mobile phone is required to take proper care of it and to ensure that measures are taken to secure it properly. This includes ensuring that it is not left unattended out of the workplace or in a vehicle.
- An employee who has lost or had their phone stolen must contact the Trustees/admin office immediately

An employee may be held responsible for any costs incurred if he or she has not taken due care of the allocated mobile phone.

Work Equipment

River Church will, in accordance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER), ensure that work equipment provided to staff will be: -

- Suitable for use, and for the purpose and conditions in which it is used
- Maintained in a safe condition for use so that staff' health and safety is not at risk and inspected in certain circumstances to ensure that it is, and continues to be, safe for use. Any inspection should be carried out by a competent person and a record kept until the next inspection.
- Clear signage and information explaining safety precautions is displayed where necessary.

- Where required, regular inspections of equipment are undertaken by a competent person and recorded.
- That potential hazards are identified by risk assessment and either removed or minimised.
- PUWER 1998 also applies to those using their own equipment for work purposes but they do have a duty under the HSW act and MHSWR 1999 to take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions.

Personal Possessions & Valuables

Staff and church attendees will be notified of insurance limitations and given useful advice and information about keeping personal possessions safe, such as use of lockable storage areas.

Environmental Policy

It is River Church policy to structure and manage its activities in such a way that will reduce the environmental impacts activities to a practicable minimum. Minimising any adverse effects to the environment and the local community, continually reviewing current practices in order to make changes where appropriate. River Church aims to ensure the Church promotes a positive image when working with enforcing agencies.

River Church is committed to operating an Environmental system that satisfies the requirements of regulatory compliance and to maintain continual improvement of our environmental performance which includes prevention of pollution to air, land, water and natural resources

- River Church is committed to providing a quality service and staff will be encouraged not to print emails and documents without good reason.
- Paper (shredded if confidential) and printer cartridges will be recycled.
- Equipment and lights are turned off outside hours.
- River Church will purchase products made from recycled or refurbished materials which are recyclable where possible.
- River Church will promote efficient use of water, electricity and other resources.
- Staff are encouraged to plan their day to minimise the amount of travel involved.
- Cleaning and disinfectant materials are bio-degradable and CFC free.
- River Church aims to purchase from local providers where economically viable.
- River Church will store and dispose of materials in a responsible manner.

Using External Venues

River Church holds meetings occasionally at staff members' homes. All meetings held by any member of staff are recommended to be in a neutral location such as a café.

The following guidelines have been produced to assist staff who organise external meetings or events. They are by no means comprehensive and complete but a sensible check list to which to refer:

If you are hiring and paying for an external venue it is reasonably safe to assume that it has met minimum safety requirements and equipment is fit for use, as it would not be available for such purpose.

- There should be a copy of the venue's Health and Safety policy on display at the venue, you should request a copy and query anything you do not fully understand.

- Fire exit signs should be present and exit routes should be clearly marked but always physically familiarise yourself with these and check that gangways and exit routes are free from obstruction. Fire doors should never be locked when a building is in use.
- It is the responsibility of the member of staff holding the meeting to convey clear and concise evacuation procedures to attendees and you should have a list of delegates present so they can be accounted for in the event of an emergency.
- Specific instructions may need to be given to those who are unable to exit the premises independently. Please ask the venue for their guidance on their procedure for providing instructions.
- Ensure there is sufficient space to undertake any activities you are planning and never exceed recommended room numbers. A risk assessment will be needed if so, please refer to the Trustees of River Church.

Catering:

- If providing food and refreshments it is essential to find out if anyone has any allergies before the event so you can organise catering accordingly.
- Always order food from a reputable business that will have had a Food Safety Inspection and will hold the appropriate certificates.
- Using a hot urn is fine but it should have a sign on it stating that water is “HOT”

External First Aid

- The venue should have a first aider and a first aid kit on site however if it does not then a qualified member of staff should attend the event and bring the First Aid Kit.

Children

- Health and Safety legislation states that River Church must be prepared for children to be less careful and knowledgeable than adults. If children are attending an event, a risk assessment should be completed specifically relating to the type of venue and event being run.

Events

All events held by River Church will be carefully planned and a risk assessment undertaken. The risk assessment will need to take into consideration some of the following factors:

- Any transport hazards at the event
- Slips, Trips and Falls (loose cables etc).
- Any site hazards such as tents/marquees/inflatable toys etc.
- Fire safety.
- Food safety including allergies.
- Manual Handling.
- Waste arrangements.
- Security and Lone Working.
- Training and Instruction provided to staff and volunteers.
- COSHH hazards present.
- Provision of first aid.

The risk assessment must be communicated to all relevant parties. For certain larger events the local authority may need to be made aware.

Young Persons, Students and Volunteers in the Workplace

A young person is defined as someone under the age of 18 years. River Church undertakes individual risk assessments when young people are engaged for either work experience or training. All of the above groups go through the River Church induction programme which includes health and safety.

Some of the extra factors which need to be taken into consideration when doing risk assessments for those not familiar with the workplace and for young people in particular are:

- restrictions in working hours and rest periods.
- lack of awareness of the dangers in the environment and exposure to risk they may not recognise.
- capability, both physical and psychological.
- extra supervision.

Young persons, students and volunteers are treated as staff for the purpose of health and safety legislation in the workplace and are covered by our employer's liability insurance.

Training & Development

River Church is committed to ensuring staff are adequately trained to enable them to comply with policies and procedures. With regard to Security and Health and Safety, River Church will ensure that:

- New staff members will receive Induction Training to ensure staff are aware of the varieties of health and safety issues that relate to their work.
- The challenges of legislation and good practice are met in a timely and well-informed way.
- All staff members are able to clearly identify their role and responsibility in relation to security and health & safety requirements.
- All staff are able to comply with any statutory requirements relating to security, health & safety requirements.
- Staff supervision consistently highlights any issues relating to health and safety matters.
- That all staff records are updated and reviewed regularly to reflect on-going training delivery and established best practice.
- In addition to induction training, ongoing staff training programmes reflect supervision outcomes and the need to remain current with changes and updates to legislation, approaches, guidance and best practice.

Legionella

River Church will ensure that the risk of Legionella is covered by the management of venues being used and ask to see relevant reports/risk assessments to ensure it is being maintained to reduce the risks.

Asbestos

River Church will ensure that an asbestos survey has been undertaken at each applicable venue hired. Staff or volunteers must not be exposed to asbestos.

Contractors

River Church should only use contractors who are pre-vetted and approved. A check of the following should be made before they can be vetted by using the contractors vetting form:

- Their health and safety policy and RAMS for the task being undertaken (the contractor should get all staff to sign the risk assessment prior to any work commencing)
- A copy of their insurances including Public Liability.
- PAT testing records for any items being brought on to River Church premises.
- Confirmation of any accreditations or certifications held such as ISO 9001/Safe Contractor.
- Evidence of Health and Safety Training for staff including first aid training.
- Equipment test/inspection records such as ladder inspection records etc.
- If applicable food safety documentation (for example food safety training certificates)

All contractors must be suitably supervised. River Church reserves the right to conduct audits on contractors to ensure that they are working safely.

Should staff have any concerns regarding the safety of any working practices being carried out by a contractor, they should stop the work as appropriate and make sure the matter is brought to the urgent attention of the Church Leaders/Trustees.

They must report any accidents or incidents to Church Leaders/Trustees.