



# WELCOME

CHURCH BUILDINGS TEAM  
LUNCHTIME SEMINARS



**Kingdom People**

love • compassion • justice • freedom



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# Fire Safety for Churches



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# What is the risk?



- Fire is the most significant of the 10 agents of deterioration.
- Fire can cause almost total loss of heritage significance.
- Life can be at risk too.

Fire needs 3 things:  
an ignition source, fuel and  
oxygen

Removing any one of these will prevent or stop a fire, reducing any of them will significantly reduce the risk of fire.

# Fuel sources in churches

- Paper, card and plastic rubbish
- Petrol
- Heating oil
- Gas
- Solvent-based cleaning products, polishes or varnishes
- Candles – in use and stored
- Timber in the church



# Ignition sources in churches – electrical and gas faults



Anything with a plug on it needs a PAT test.

Building wiring needs an electrical safety check every five years.

Annual gas safety checks on boilers and stoves.

Sufficient gap between stove top and work surfaces.



# Ignition sources in churches - lightning

With climate change, electrical storms and lightning strikes are now more common in the UK. Consider lightning protection.



# Ignition sources in churches – Lit candles and matches



- Matches and tapers
- Children and candles
- Candles and foliage
- Wax is a fuel
- Orange oil is flammable
- Burning wax creates a lot of soot



Do your risk assessment before planning a candlelit service



# Arson in churches



Deliberate fire-setting  
“Hot works” can set up  
smouldering especially  
in rotten timber

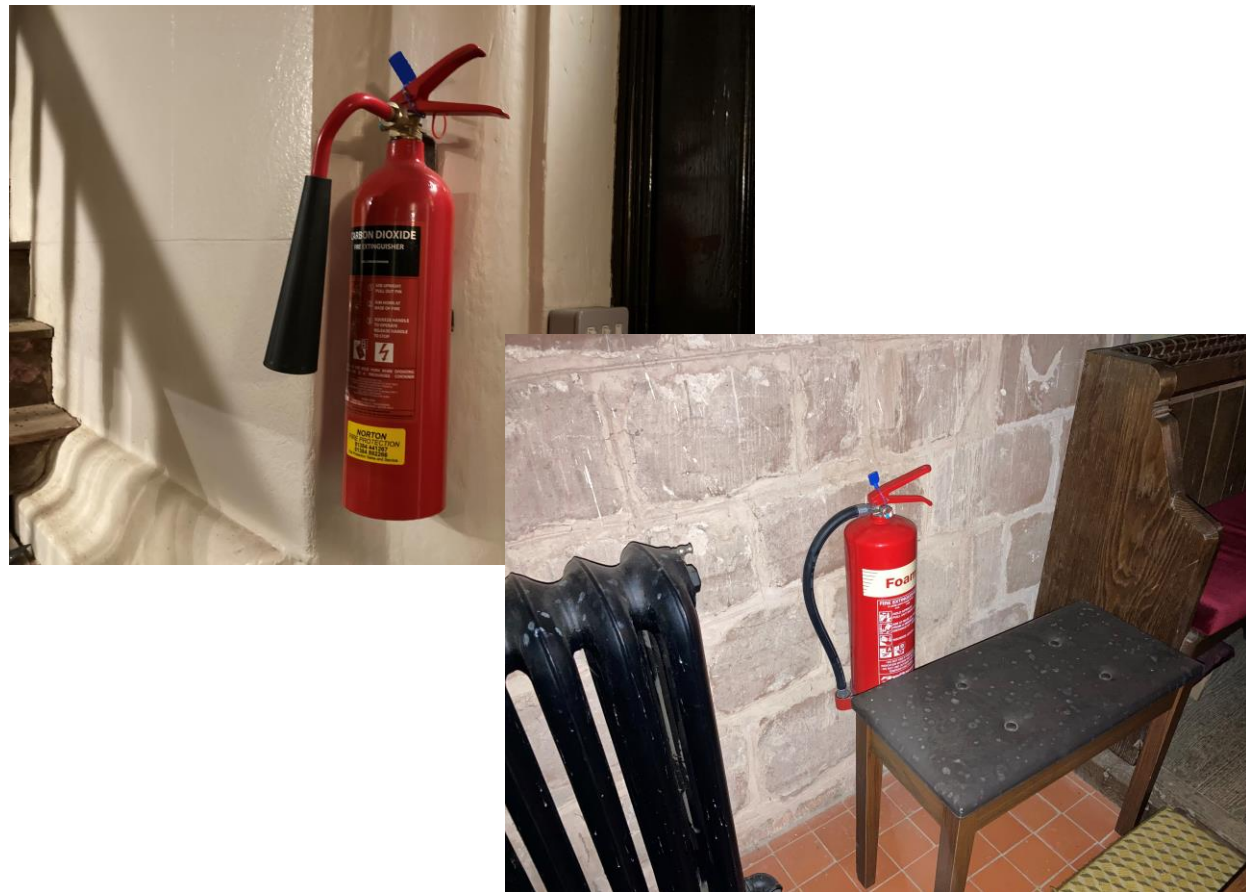


# Oxygen – or at least air and the chimney effect in churches



Compartmentalisation and keeping doors closed will reduce the spread of fire.

# Actions needed to reduce risk to people



- Undertake a fire risk assessment - good template at <https://ecclesiastical.com/documents/church-fire-risk-assessment.pdf>
- Signpost fire exits
- Identify alternative means of exit and unlock these
- Don't signpost doors that you can't get out of
- Have the right sort of fire extinguishers in the right place – and don't use as doorstops!

# Actions needed to reduce risk to people

- Use a fire marshal system, especially for larger services and events such as weddings and funerals where congregation may not be familiar with the building.
- Practice – in different scenarios
- In a complex church, invite the local fire crew in for a familiarisation visit.