



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

# Help and Advice

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## Bulletin 40: HEALTH & SAFETY

The Help & Advice Group was set up by Synod in 2009, to support local churches in being informed and effective in their life and mission. The group was disbanded in 2014, as part of a simplification of Synod committees, and its work continues through the Trust Officer, under the oversight of the Trust. We are willing to try to provide specific advice on particular topics. Please get in touch if you have questions or suggestions.

This article is part of a series giving an overview of particular subjects on interest for local churches. We also circulate general updates from time to time. Bulletins will also be posted on the members' area of the website with direct links to other websites.

Where readers are directed to web-based resources, the Synod Office is willing to respond to reasonable requests for printed out information for readers without web access, although they may find it more satisfactory to follow up their interest through their local library's web access.

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This bulletin updates churches on 3 Health & Safety-related issues.

### First Aid

The Health & Safety Executive's brief leaflet *Basic Advice on First Aid at Work* can be downloaded from: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg347.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg347.pdf).

Bulletin 9 gives more details on legal requirements regarding first aid, including an accident record book, trained first aiders (where applicable), and the contents of a first aid box.

The HSE has now recently confirmed that plasters may also be included in a first aid kit, as most people with allergies will be aware of it. Alternatively, low or hypo-allergenic plasters could be provided.

First aid kits can be bought online for £12.50 from [sales@firstaid4less.co.uk](mailto:sales@firstaid4less.co.uk) (amongst other places).

### Fire Exit Routes

Earlier this year a Birmingham firm was fined £13,500 after a man fell 9 feet when a cast iron fire escape collapsed. Anglican priest and Health & Safety professional Father Jeff Leach advises churches to maintain fire exit routes, which should:

- be unlocked at all times when a building is occupied;
- either be clearly marked or be pointed out to those present when the building is being used;

- have routes that can be followed in the event of a power failure;
- be walked and checked for lighting, including emergency lighting;
- have doors that:
  - open in an outward direction;
  - are fully functional; and
  - close behind those evacuating to ensure that smoke and heat cannot travel easily;
- be checked to ensure that flooring is in a good condition and not damaged, so as to avoid causing trip hazards, noting especially steps and slopes;
- lead to a safe place away from the building but not to a place that will hamper the emergency services; and
- be easily used by disabled persons and wheelchair users.

You should also make sure that routes are kept clear following any alterations or other similar works.

Well used escape routes are the ones people will use in emergencies. If such routes are not used then most people will try to evacuate via the route they know best: the front doors. So if routes are not used often then you need to have 'fire drills' – even on a Sunday morning!

### **Health & Safety Law Poster**

Churches with employees should already be aware of the legal requirement to display a poster in prescribed form on the premises. Please check that you are now using the new version (required by April 2014): [www.hse.gov.uk/contact/fags/lawposter.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/fags/lawposter.htm).

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