

Keeping people safe

Health and safety toolkit - environmental considerations



Environmental considerations

Environmental changes are putting our church buildings at an increasingly greater threat from the elements. Whilst we must do all we can to prevent environmental pollution at a local level, we also need to ensure that we adapt our church buildings and protect them from the impacts of climate change.

From an insurance perspective, some of the key environmental considerations for churches include:

Oil storage

Corroded, damaged or faulty tanks and pipe work can leak oil into the ground, potentially polluting rivers, streams and ground water; contaminating drinking water supplies; killing vegetation, and affecting other properties or facilities.

Typical precautions if storing oil in a container with a capacity of 201 litres or more include:

- selecting a container that meets suitable design standards e.g. British Standard 5410: Code of practice for oil firing
- using a double-skinned, plastic, storage container
- choosing someone competent to install your oil storage tank
- siting the container somewhere that minimises the risk of it being damaged by impact and away from water courses
- providing impact protection (e.g. barriers, bollards) where there is a risk of the tank being struck by vehicles etc.
- providing secondary containment (i.e. either a drip tray beneath the container or a bund – an outer case which holds the container). Fixed tanks must be banded. Any bund must hold 110% of the capacity of the container. If you do not have a bund, check your secondary containment has the required capacity, depending on what kind of container it's holding
- providing a suitable drip tray if the tank is remotely filled outside the secondary containment
- regular checks for leaks or damage to pipework or other safeguards
- proper maintenance in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Further information is available at www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/oil-storage.

Flooding

Flooding in your church and associated properties can cause inconvenience and heartache to your church community. It is not possible to completely flood-proof your church properties, but there are some simple actions you can take to reduce the damage a flood may cause.

Typical precautions include:

- finding out if you're at particular risk of flooding by making suitable checks
- taking simple steps to protect your church property (e.g. using temporary flood barriers)
- making your church building more resilient (e.g. relocating more vulnerable items to higher levels)
- developing a simple emergency plan that can be implemented should a flood occur
- making suitable arrangements for recovery after a flood (e.g. opening doors to reduce humidity).

Further information is available at www.baptist-insurance.co.uk/churchguidance.

Waste

Disposing of any waste (including hazardous waste and waste electrical/electronic equipment) properly not only protects the environment, but also stops it from becoming a nuisance to others.

Most waste from churches will be classified as 'household' waste. Occasionally though, you may have to dispose of waste which is hazardous or electrical. Here, you may have to take certain steps to ensure that this is disposed of or recycled safely.

Further guidance and information on what you have to do will be available from your Local Council.



Want to know more?

We have produced some other useful resources to help you get started or simply check the adequacy of what you have already done. These are all available at:

www.baptist-insurance.co.uk/churchguidance

Note: if you are in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man then regional variations might apply. In this instance, you should check the guidance provided by the Enforcing Agency for your region. This will be freely available on their website.

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Need to contact us?

For further information on health and safety in churches:

Call our Risk Management Advice Line on

0345 600 7531

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (excluding Bank Holidays).

We may monitor or record calls to improve our service.

Email us at: risk.advice@baptist-ins.com

