



CLERGY
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Risk Assessment Protocol for Church Activities

OUR LADY IMMACULATE ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

Risk Assessment Protocol for Church Activities

Introduction

This Protocol is produced by Our Lady Immaculate Parish, Tolworth, to assist in the discharge of its health and safety responsibilities under UK legislation. To use it You should be reasonably acquainted with the principles of Risk Assessment, and it may help to read the Health & Safety Executive's leaflet 'Five Steps to Risk Assessment'. A more detailed description and explanation can be found in 'A Guide to Health & Safety: During Work, Activities and Functions Within Church Properties or Grounds' produced by the Archdiocese of Southwark, and held in the Presbytery.

Definitions

You:- 'You' assumes the person generally considered to be 'in charge' of an event, ceremony, training or Parish Group (a 'function'). 'You' may delegate to another, but the delegation should be in writing, eg within a minuted meeting. 'You' may not be a group of people. In a committee organization, 'You' will be the Chair, unless responsibility is delegated as above. Nothing in this Protocol should inhibit discussion, but 'You' must take responsibility for the Parish function.

Parish Staff:- Parish Staff includes all Parish Group volunteers, co-opted parishioners, event organisers as well as formally employed staff.

Parishioners:- Those members of the Parish attending any function organised by you or delegates, who are not 'organizers' of the function. Parishioners are most likely to be more aware of the customary behaviour when attending a parish function, than would others.

Others:- Friends, guests, visiting clergy, visiting dignitaries, contractors, uniformed group members from non-OLI groups, undertakers, delivery staff, emergency service staff, members of the public. This list is not exhaustive, but the definition should cover everybody who is likely to attend at an OLI function.

What to do

Step 1. You should look for the hazards that are reasonably foreseeable. It may help to prepare a Procedure of events (eg a list of all the expected activities in time order). You should then write each hazard in the left-hand column of a copy of the Risk Assessment Form (Page 3).

Step 2. You must then decide who could be harmed by the hazard: Parishioners, Clergy or Parish Staff, or Others. It may help to think how might they be harmed, and how many might be harmed.

Step 3. You should then evaluate the risks. This can be done by using the Risk Factor ready-reckoner on Page 4, and recording it on the Risk Assessment Form. If existing precautions are adequate (Risk Factor 3 or less), no more needs to be done (except to sign the form!)

Step 4. If the Risk Factor is higher, then you must devise controls to eliminate or reduce the risk. Once these controls are entered in the Risk Assessment Form, you can re-assess the hazard and evaluate the risk again. If the Risk Factor is still not low, then you must think of more controls. (Now may be the time to seek advice).

Step 5. When complete, you must sign the form and ensure copies are sent to the Parish Office for filing in the appropriate location. Before the parish 'function' starts, you must tell everybody involved about the Risk Assessment and what the controls are. You must also make sure the controls are followed. You must review the Risk Assessment from time to time, especially if a significant change in circumstances occurs.

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Guidance for preparing Risk Assessments

Step 1. 'Hazard' means anything that can cause harm (e.g. chemicals and other hazardous substances, electricity, working from ladders, carrying heavy things). Look at all your activities, including non-routine things. Look at what actually happens rather than what should happen...

Don't forget that other Parish Groups may have already completed a Risk Assessment for the same activity as you. Check with them first. If their Risk Assessment is uniquely numbered (see Appendix 1) you could simply cross-reference to that.

Step 2. Think about how people may be at risk - do their actions involve lifting and moving things, visiting people alone in their home, working with the public, working at height? Are very young or very old people involved? What about disabled people? Are lots of people at risk or only a few? Will it be dark? Will it be wet? Consider the possibility of fire and any special evacuation procedure. Note: normal fire evacuation will be covered under other Risk Assessments, but you will still need to tell everybody about it.

Step 3. For each hazard, evaluate the chance, big or small, of harm actually being done (the Probability). Ask yourself "How likely is it to happen?" Then for each hazard, consider "what would be the likely result?" (not the worst result). Would it be bruising, a broken finger or someone being killed? (the Severity). You must decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more could be done. Don't forget that, even if you have a low risk of harm, if you can see a way of reducing the risk even further, you should do it.

Step 4. If you consider more needs to be done to reduce the risk, first ask yourself if you can avoid the hazard by doing whatever it is in a different way. If not, you need to think about controlling the hazard more effectively. For example:

- it may be worth discussing things with the people who are at risk, to solve problems and agree precautions;
- don't forget that training, information, instruction and supervision could be given.
- if hazards are inter-related, choose the most important things to tackle first;

Remember, even after all precautions have been taken, some risk will often remain. The important things you need to decide are whether the hazard is significant, and whether you have controlled it by satisfactory precautions so that the risk is as small as reasonably possible. You need to check this when you assess the risk.

If you can't find a way to reduce the risk of a significant hazard then the activity should not take place.

Step 5. Review your assessment from time to time, and revise it if necessary- Remember that things change; you might take on new work. Rules get broken and people don't always do as they've been told. The only way to find out about changes like these is by checking. Don't wait until things have gone wrong. Check that the hazards are the same and that the precautions are adequate.

Remember the HSE leaflet 'Five Steps to Risk Assessment'. Although it is primarily aimed at small businesses, it has much that is appropriate for a voluntary organization such as ours. It can be downloaded for free from the HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>, or can be found in 'A Guide to Health & Safety' produced by the Archdiocese of Southwark, and kept in the Presbytery. This Guide also contains examples of risks and hazards in Section 3, Risk Assessment.

Reviews of risk assessments must be made as necessary. If circumstances are constantly changing, the risk assessment for a particular activity may have to be reviewed every month (or every week). Alternatively the development and application of generic or standard Risk Assessments is acceptable, provided that the assessment is always reviewed (and recorded) prior to a 'function' to confirm that a particular standard practice is appropriate.

For Parish Structures and Functions requiring Risk Assessments to be prepared, see Appendix 1.
For examples of completed Risk Assessments see Appendix 2.

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Risk Factor: 0 – 3 Low Risk 4 – 12 Medium Risk 13 – 25 High Risk	Activity: _____ Risk Assessment N ^o _____ Start Date: _____ Duration: _____	Our Lady Immaculate Roman Catholic Parish 401-403 Ewell Road Tolworth Surbiton Surrey Tel: 020 8399 9550 KT6 7DG e-mail: ourladyimmaculate@ukonline.co.uk
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Hazard	Who is affected and how many?			What is the Risk now?			What can you do to make it safer? How soon?	Risk after Control Measures?		
	Parishioners	Clergy & Parish Staff	Others	Prob ^{ty}	Sev ^{ty}	Risk Factor	Control Measures	Prob ^{ty}	Sev ^{ty}	Risk Factor

Assessor: _____	Signed: _____	Date: _____
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You should give a copy of this completed form to the Presbytery for the Health & Safety file

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Risk Factor Ready-reckoner

		<i>Risk Factor:</i>				
		5	10	15	20	25
Probability	Very High	5	10	15	20	25
	High	4	8	12	16	20
	Medium	3	6	9	12	15
	Low	2	4	6	8	10
	Very Low	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
		Minor injury – No First Aid required	Minor Injury or illness First Aid required	Severe Injury – Hospital treatment required	Major injury – long- term incapacity or disability	Death or major incapacity
		Severity				

Risk Factor = Probability x Severity

13 and above - High Risk
Get a Parish Health and Safety advisor to help if you don't know what to do to reduce the risk

4 – 12 - Medium Risk
You should be able to work out what you have to do to reduce the risk.

3 or less – Low Risk
If you can think of ways to reduce the risk further – use them.

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Appendix 1 Parish Structures and Functions Requiring Risk Assessments

1-Parish Structure

01. Presbytery and Parish Office
02. Maintenance Committee works
03. Finance Committee
04. Buildings use

(Functions and groups may be added or removed from time-to-time as necessary)

2-Liturgical Functions:

01. The Mass
02. Altar servers
03. Young Person's Group
04. Children's Liturgy
05. Choir
06. Eucharistic Ministers
07. Readers
08. Sacristy & Sanctuary

The structures and functions list is numbered to assist with record-keeping. If lots of Risk Assessments are generated, it is easier to keep them in order when they are numbered.

3-Pastoral Functions

01. Afternoons for Adults
02. Bereavement Support Group
03. Co-workers of Mother Teresa
04. Healing Ministry
05. Justice & Peace Group
06. Knights of St Columba
07. St Vincent de Paul Society
08. Secular Franciscan Order
09. Union of Catholic Mothers
10. Welcomers

4-Education and Formation

01. Baptism
02. First Holy Communion
03. Confirmation
04. Engaged Couples
05. Meditation Group
06. Prayer Group
07. Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
08. Scripture Group

5-Social and Practical Functions

01. Care and Friendship for Everyone (CAFÉ)
02. Church Cleaning
03. Church Watch
04. Family Leisure Activities Group (FLAG)
05. Flower Arranging
06. Games Club
07. Toddler & Baby Group
08. After-Mass refreshments