



# **ACC-NSW**

# **SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROCEDURES**

An initiative of the Safe Places Unit  
**ACC-NSW**  
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# ACC-NSW SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROCEDURES

## PREAMBLE

This document is underpinned by the following policy statements from ACC-NSW CHILD-SAFE AND CHILD-FRIENDLY POLICY 2008 – 2011:

- We will afford children and young people a say in the programs and the activities in which they are to participate, by fostering and valuing their ideas, and encouraging participation in all areas of the life of the church, as far as is sensible and practical.
- We will obtain information relating to the children and young people's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for the physical and emotional needs of the children and young people.
- All leaders will agree to follow the ACC-NSW Safe Environment Procedures.
- Leaders will exercise a duty of care by using forms, checklists and templates made available through the TOWARDS SAFE PLACES IMPLEMENTATION PACK for establishing and maintaining safe environments in ACC-NSW churches.
- All senior leadership and heads of department will ensure that the following areas are incorporated into establishing and maintaining a safe physical environment in their churches:
  - OH&S
  - first aid protocols
  - food safety practices
  - risk assessment for activities
  - adequate ministry supervision for activities
  - transport protocols
  - critical incident and emergency protocols
  - ministry review.

Australian Christian Churches in NSW (**ACC-NSW**) have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for their staff, volunteers, clients and visitors, and to protect other people's property from damage.

ACC-NSW also recognises the obligation it has to those who enter ACC-NSW premises and participate in the activities provided, and those who come under its care in an external environment.

In order to fulfil our responsibilities ACC-NSW expects all churches to:

1. Provide a safe and secure environment
2. Conduct risk assessments of the environment where work and activities are conducted and will, as far as is reasonably practicable, eliminate or work to manage the identified risks
3. Develop and implement risk management/maintenance plans

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SECTION 1: In providing a safe and secure environment, it is recommended that:

**1. Appropriate first aid equipment and personnel are in place for activities.**

- Leaders are to be encouraged to complete a Senior First Aid Certificate
- A First Aid Officer is to be rostered on every week at a ministry involving children and young people
- Prior to the start of a ministry session, the Ministry Co-ordinator will inform all leaders of the rostered First Aid Officer
- A list of volunteers from the congregation, holding a current Senior First Aid Certificate, is to be drawn up
- If no Ministry First Aid Officers are able to be present on a particular week, a volunteer First Aid Officer from the congregation is to be approached to attend the ministry program for the given event
- The First Aid Kit is to be maintained by Church Safety Officer (*see definition for Church Safety Officer at the end of this document*)
- A list of contents for the First Aid Kit is to be attached to the inside of the kit and items taken are to be recorded (*See Form 27 in TOWARDS SAFE PLACES IMPLEMENTATION PACK*)
- Disposable plastic gloves are to be worn by the First Aid Officer when administering First Aid
- Incidents requiring First aid treatment are to be recorded (*e.g. in the Ministry Day Book*) and initialled by parents at the end of the ministry
- During a medical critical incident, the Ministry Co-ordinator is responsible for contacting parents and seeking urgent medical attention, prior to parental direction
- Medical information, including permission for access of emergency medical treatment is to be completed upon registration to join the program (*see Form 23 in TOWARDS SAFE PLACES IMPLEMENTATION PACK*)
- The First Aid Officer rostered on duty is responsible for administering any emergency medications.
- Before administering medication, the First Aid officer is to check the parameters of medication administration from the child or young person's personal information form.
- When emergency medication is required, the Ministry Co-ordinator will contact the parent immediately
- Where a child, young person or leader suffers from a food allergy, Ministry Co-ordinators are responsible for informing helpers providing food in their ministry.
- Ministry Co-ordinators are required to take copies of Medical Information to all off-premises activities.
- Medical Information is to be kept in a secure location on the church premises

## 2. Safe food handling and hygiene practices are employed.

- Guidelines for employing safe food handling practices are to be displayed in all food preparation areas at the church premises (*washing hands, wearing of aprons, closed in shoes, tying back long hair, wearing disposable gloves*)

NOTE: A Food Safety Poster may be downloaded from:

[http://www.adelaidecitycouncil.com/adccwr/publications/brochures\\_flyers/food\\_health\\_poster.pdf](http://www.adelaidecitycouncil.com/adccwr/publications/brochures_flyers/food_health_poster.pdf)

- Churches are to make aprons and disposable gloves available for use in food preparation areas at the church premises
- When a leader is unwell, they are not involved in food handling
- When providing food for church events, the ACC-NSW Food Safety Guidelines are followed (see *Form 28* in TOWARDS SAFE PLACES IMPLEMENTATION PACK)

## 3. Safe manual handling, lifting and moving techniques are encouraged.

- Safe manual handling techniques are to be used when lifting or moving equipment of furniture (see GUIDANCE ON MANUAL HANDLING, ACT Work Cover, [http://www.workcover.act.gov.au/pdfs/guides\\_cop/guidance\\_on\\_manual\\_handling.pdf](http://www.workcover.act.gov.au/pdfs/guides_cop/guidance_on_manual_handling.pdf) or NSW Work Cover, [http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/52AB13BC-77B6-44C4-95B2-4C4A4073C98C/0/manual\\_handling\\_resource\\_1306.pdf](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/52AB13BC-77B6-44C4-95B2-4C4A4073C98C/0/manual_handling_resource_1306.pdf) )
- At the beginning of each year, all leaders are to be briefed in safe lifting techniques
- Persons responsible for lifting or moving equipment or furniture shall be trained in safe manual handling techniques

## 4. Information on safe handling of hazardous substances is provided.

NOTE: Hazardous substances are chemicals that have the potential to harm peoples' health either in the short term (e.g. *hours, days*) or long term (e.g. *months, years, decades*). They may be chemicals, materials or products. When used, some materials and products generate hazardous substances.

- All hazardous substances are to be stored securely
- Children and young people are not to enter areas where hazardous substances are stored unless escorted and supervised by a leader
- Doors to areas containing hazardous substances are to be closed at all times during ministry programs
- The church is to make rubber gloves available to those handling hazardous substances at the church premises

## 5. Safe visual and auditory care is provided for workers and those attending programs as part of the church

### Visual Care:

- Effective lighting is to be used during all church events
- Faulty lights are not to be used during church events
- Faulty light globes and fittings are to be brought to the notice of the Church Safety Officer and are to be replaced as soon as practicable

**Auditory care:**

- Consideration is to be given to auditory comfort when setting volume levels of audio equipment
- Volume of audio equipment during church events is to be kept at less than 85 decibels or lower, or as deemed to be appropriate by the senior church leadership for a given situation (*Additional information on impact of noise may be found at <http://www.hearing.com.au/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=40&languageId=1&contentId=-1>* )
- Persons operating sound desk during church events, are to be trained in providing safe auditory levels

**6. On-site and off-site venue hazards are identified and effective control measures are implemented.**

- An OH&S audit is to be conducted on the church property (*including ministry and staff areas*) once a term and the outcome reported to the senior church leadership (*see Form 25 in TOWARDS SAFE PLACES IMPLEMENTATION PACK*)
- Where hazards exist, Ministry Co-ordinators and Elders are responsible for implementing Hierarchy of Control Measures (*see Form 26 in TOWARDS SAFE PLACES IMPLEMENTATION PACK*)
- Prior to the commencement of a ministry activity, Ministry Co-ordinators (*and Elders in the case of Sunday Services*) are responsible for ensuring any potential hazards are minimised
- Senior church leadership is responsible for ensuring suitably qualified people attend to any repairs or modifications
- Furniture and equipment are not blocking any entries or exits to ministry areas
- Offices and all areas of ministry activity should be kept neat and tidy at all times so trip, slip and fall hazards are not created

**7. Those undertaking off-site activities are encouraged to consider aspects of establishing a safe environment.**

- See *Form 37* in TOWARDS SAFE PLACES IMPLEMENTATION PACK

**8. Applying emergency procedures including emergency evacuations, use of fire extinguishers and Critical Incident Response Plan**

- A marshalling point to be used during an emergency evacuation is to be decided and communicated to the congregation by the Church Safety Officer
- The Ministry Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring correct evacuation and marshalling procedures are followed during ministry activities
- Church Elders are responsible for ensuring correct evacuation and marshalling procedures are followed during ministry activities
- Once all those present in a ministry program have vacated the building during an emergency, the Ministry Co-ordinator will take a roll, using the Ministry Sign In/ Sign Out form (*See Form 24 in TOWARDS SAFE PLACES IMPLEMENTATION PACK*)
- During an emergency the Critical Incident Response Plan is to be activated (*See Form 33 in TOWARDS SAFE PLACES IMPLEMENTATION PACK*)

- The Ministry Co-ordinator will ensure that at least 2 leaders are trained in the use of the fire extinguishers
- At the beginning of each year a short briefing session on emergency evacuation and fire safety procedures will be held for all ministry leaders
- At least once a year, children, young people and leaders will practise an emergency evacuation drill

**9. Buildings are maintaining in a state of good repair**

- The senior church leadership in collaboration with the Church Safety Officer (*and landlord in cases where the premises is rented from another party*) are responsible for ensuring that buildings used for church events are maintained in a state of good repair
- Maintenance checks for smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are to be organised by the Church Safety Officer on an annual basis

**10. Security measures are employed to ensure people and property security**

- When holding events on church premises, the Ministry Co-ordinator (*and Elders for Sunday Services*) are responsible for ensuring that adequate security measures are employed to safeguard people and their property, inside and outside of church premises

SECTION 2: In conducting risk assessments of the environment where work and activities are conducted and, as far as is reasonably practicable, eliminating or managing identified risks it is recommended that:

**1. Risks in premises and ministry program activities are identified**

- Risks are identified using appropriate risk identification and assessment tools (See DEFINITIONS *and Attachment A for sample tool*)

**2. Risk registers to assess risks are completed**

- When risks have been identified, a Risk Register is used to assess the risk (See DEFINITIONS *and Attachment A for sample tool*)

**3. Risk action plans are developed and implemented**

- When a Risk Register has been completed, a Risk Action Plan is developed and implemented (See DEFINITIONS *and Attachment A for sample tool*)

**4. Risk action plans are monitored**

- The Church Safety Officer in collaboration with senior church leadership is responsible for monitoring the Risk Action Plan

SECTION 3: In developing and implement risk management/maintenance plans, it is recommended that:

**1. A Church Safety Officer is appointed**

- A church safety officer is responsible for:
  - Liaising with Heads of Department to ensure that all aspects of risk identification, assessment and management are implemented in a church
  - Providing information on safe work practices
  - Keeping records of all documentation pertaining to incidents related to risk or hazards associated with church premises and activities
  - Keeping senior church leadership informed of risk management status

**2. Areas of risk are identified and managed**

- The Church Safety Officer in collaboration with senior church leadership is to use appropriate documentation when identifying and managing risk (See *sample in Attachment A*)

**3. All incidents, areas of potential risk and actual hazards are reported to the Church Safety Officer, using appropriate documentation**

- The Ministry Co-ordinators are to communicate identified hazards and potential risks and information on how they have minimised or controlled potential risks and hazards (See *Form 26 in TOWARDS SAFE PLACES IMPLEMENTATION PACK*)

**4. The risk or hazard status of the premises and activities is regularly communicated to senior church leadership**

- The Church Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring that senior church leadership is made aware of the risk or hazard status of the church premises and activities on a regular basis

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## DEFINITIONS

### **What is risk?**

Risk is the exposure to the possibility of such things as economic or financial loss or gain, physical damage, injury or delay, because of pursuing or not pursuing a particular course of action. The concept of risk includes:

- The perception that something could happen
- The likelihood of it occurring
- The consequences if it does occur

### **What is a hazard?**

A hazard is an actual source of danger that could result in an accident if undue care is not exercised.

### **What is risk management?**

Risk management is the process of managing your organisation's exposure to potential risks and actual hazards.

Where risk assessment considers things that might be a risk or go wrong, hazard identification and control measures relate to actual hazards that are present.

In risk management, risks are identified and assessed (*Risk Register*) in order to prevent them or reduce them, and by providing funds to meet any liability if it occurs.

### **What is a Risk Register?**

A Risk Register is one way of documenting risks that have been identified, control measures that are in place to address risks and level of risk assessed.

### **What is a Risk Action Plan?**

A Risk Action Plan is used to describe what additional measures you will use to reduce, eradicate or manage potential risks identified in your Risk Register for your organisation. It also includes information on resources required (*people, equipment, financial*), lines of responsibility and timeline for implementation.

### **What is a Church Safety Officer?**

A Church Safety Officer is responsible for:

- Liaising with Heads of Department to ensure that all aspects of risk identification, assessment and management are implemented in a church
- Providing information on safe work practices
- Keeping records of all documentation pertaining to incidents related to risk or hazards associated with church premises and activities
- Keeping senior church leadership informed of risk management status

ATTACHMENT A: SAMPLE RISK IDENTIFICATION & ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION<sup>1</sup>**What is risk?**

Risk is the exposure to the possibility of such things as economic or financial loss or gain, physical damage, injury or delay, because of pursuing or not pursuing a particular course of action. The concept of risk includes:

- The perception that something could happen
- The likelihood of it occurring and
- The consequences if it does occur.<sup>1</sup>

As part of providing ministry programs, you are likely to encounter risks. These risks<sup>ii</sup> might include:

- Occupational Health and Safety (*including hazards*)
- Financial and administrative
- Property
- Delivery of services
- Public liability
- Litigation
- Public relations

**Descriptions & Ratings****Determining the severity of risk**

<b>Likelihood – What are the chances the risk situation will occur during a ministry program?</b>	
VERY LIKELY	Occurs routinely & can be expected to occur during the program
LIKELY	Occurs often & a good chance to happen
MODERATE	Should occur at some time
UNLIKELY	Could possibly occur at some time
VERY UNLIKELY	Could possibly occur but would be an exceptional circumstance

<b>Consequence –What harm could result if the situation occurred?</b>	
INSIGNIFICANT	No likely injuries to person, no property damage, no financial loss, no effect on reputation of church, no disruption to the program, aims of program still achieved
MINOR	First aid treatment for person, minor property damage, small financial loss, little impact on reputation of church, little program disruption, most aims of the program achieved
MODERATE	Medical treatment to self or others, significant property damage, some impact on reputation of church, intervention by outside agency needed, significant financial loss, moderate program disruption, some of the aims of program achieved
MAJOR	Extensive injuries or permanent impairment likely, major property damage, significant impact on reputation of church, significant outside intervention, major financial loss, major program disruption, most of the aims of the program not achieved
INTOLERABLE	Permanent impairment or death, property damage irretrievable, irretrievable impact on reputation of church, permanent intervention required (organisational leadership), financial cost lead to closing of program, program irretrievably damaged, none of the program aims achieved

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Presenting Safe Places Workshops, CMI Vocational Training Pty Ltd, 2008

## Level of Risk

Consequence or impact	Likelihood				
	VERY UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY	MODERATE	LIKELY	VERY LIKELY
INTOLERABLE	Significant	High	High	High	High
MAJOR	Significant	Significant	High	High	High
MODERATE	Medium	Medium	Significant	Significant	High
MINOR	Low	Low	Medium	Significant	Significant
INSIGNIFICANT	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Significant

## Level of risk key

Risk rating	Description
LOW RISK	Regular monitoring – risk management strategies ( <i>Hierarchy of Control Measures</i> ) used are likely to be sufficient to manage the risk
MEDIUM RISK	Adapt usual risk management strategies, and monitor progress
SIGNIFICANT RISK	Identify management plan for specific risks, continuous monitoring by senior church leadership
HIGH RISK	Considerable attention will need to manage unique needs of the risk situation. Question whether the program can sustain this level of risk

## Adequacy of control measures

Key	Rating	Description
MTA	More than adequate	Addresses all potential risks and includes extensive contingency measures
A	Adequate	Addresses most potential risks and includes some contingency measures
NCA	Not completely adequate	Addresses most potential risks but does not include any contingency measures
TI	Totally inadequate	Does not address all potential risks and does not include any contingency measures

## What is risk management?

Risk management is the process of managing your organisation's exposure to potential liabilities. It does this by identifying risks in order to prevent them or reduce them, and by providing funds to meet any liability if it occurs.<sup>iii</sup>

It can be a useful exercise to do a risk assessment for your premises and ministry programs at least annually. This does not replace a **Hazard Identification** for each ministry program. The **Risk Assessment** looks at what might happen, whereas **Hazard Identification** looks at what is present at the venue at a specific time.

Risk Register

IDENTIFICATION			ASSESSMENT			
Potential risks (situations/areas)	Results of risk (situation/areas)	Existing control measure	Adequacy of control measure/ justification for rating	Consequence rating	Likelihood rating	Risk rating
<p>EXAMPLE: Too many young people for number of leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of supervision</li> <li>Inadequate numbers to deal effectively with critical incidents</li> </ul>	<p>Additional leaders available on emergency call</p>	<p>Not completely adequate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May not be available at the time required</li> <li>Time taken to reach venue may mean they are not there when critical incidents occur</li> </ul>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>Likely</p>	<p>Significant</p>

## Risk Action Plan

A **Risk Action Plan** describes how you will implement your organisation's preferred treatment options for managing the risks that have been identified.

After completing the **Risk Register**, it is helpful to determine where your workshop risk can be reduced and minimized through additional risk management strategies. This may be known as a **Risk Action Plan**. (Example Risk Action Plan on following page)

### Risk Action Plan Template

Risk Item			
Recommended Response			
Proposed actions			
Resource requirements			
Responsibilities throughout implementation of the plan			
Time frame for implementation of action			
Reporting & monitoring requirements			
Person responsible to overall implementation of the plan		Date	
Reviewer		Date	

**EXAMPLE RISK ACTION PLAN BASED ON EXAMPLE IN RISK REGISTER**

Risk Item	Too many young people attending for leader numbers		
Recommended Response	Control risk by developing & implementing program resourcing protocols		
Proposed actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine ratios – minimum leader numbers &amp; maximum young</li> <li>• Draw up roster for all main leaders</li> <li>• Secure additional leaders committed to be available each week during hours of program &amp; draw up roster</li> <li>• If leaders not able to be present, they are to notify Co-ordinator at least 3 hours prior to commencement of program</li> <li>• If minimum number of leaders not secured, cancel the program for the day</li> <li>• If program cancelled have at least 2 leaders at venue when program due to start to inform young people &amp; notify local school</li> <li>• Leaders to wear identifying clothing (shirts) to enable all young people &amp; parents to identify those in authority</li> </ul>		
Resource requirements	<p>Additional paid hours for Youth Co-ordinator to develop &amp; co-ordinate roster.</p> <p>Church leadership to provide material &amp; practical support to enable Youth Co-ordinator to complete task roles</p>		
Responsibilities	Youth co-ordinator to liaise with Church leadership regarding Risk Schedule & Plan		
Timing	To be implemented immediately		
Reporting & monitoring required	<p>Monitored weekly by Youth Co-ordinator</p> <p>Youth co-ordinator provide written report to Church leadership each month &amp; a verbal report quarterly</p>		
Person responsible	Youth Co-ordinator	Date	1/7/07
Reviewer	Chairperson of Church Board	Date	1/12/07

NOTES:

<sup>i</sup> Extract from BSBCMN416A – Identify risk and apply risk management processes, Business Services Training Package, IBSA, 2006, sourced from Australasian Risk Management Unit, Monash University , 2003, ***How to slash your insurance claims: the essential steps to identifying and managing risk***, Our Community Pty Ltd. [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

<sup>ii</sup> Adapted from BSBCMN416A – ***Identify risk and apply risk management processes***, Business Services Training Package, IBSA, 2006.

<sup>iii</sup> Extract from BSBCMN416A – ***Identify risk and apply risk management processes***, Business Services Training Package, IBSA, 2006, sources from Volunteering Australia, 2003, ***Running the Risk?***, [http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/publications/risk\\_man.html](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/publications/risk_man.html)