



**THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH & COMMUNITY OF COVENTRY
ARCHDIOCESE OF THYATEIRA AND GREAT BRITAIN**

Greek Orthodox Church of Coventry

Fire Safety Procedures

A. BACKGROUND

1. The fire safety procedures for the Church were reviewed and agreed by the Church Committee Meeting on 7 February 2018 and are to be adhered to until such time as they are reviewed in the light of new experiences.

2. It is of paramount importance to recognise that the building is a religious establishment with all the connotations that this entails. The church normally operates on a Sunday morning with an average weekly attendance of 50 persons, from the hours of 10:30 am to 13:00 hours. The busiest times of the year are Good Friday and Easter Midnight Mass when there may be a congregation of between 100 and 200. These occasions present the greatest challenge for the church committee.

3. The religious ceremonies and the sensitive nature of the congregation make it impossible to break up the service to practice fire drills and evacuation procedures during the year. Hence the decision has been taken to rely heavily on preparedness and fire prevention and only in the event of a real fire to put into effect the Fire Plan and evacuation procedure outlined in paragraph 10 below.

The Church Committee Chairman shall announce to the congregation, before the start of the holy ceremonies during the most popular religious events, the fire safety procedure and the plan of action in the event of real fire.

B. RESPONSIBLE FIRE OFFICERS

4. Given the voluntary participation of parishioners to the running of the church, the 12 member Church Committee has agreed that all Committee members are allocated fire marshal responsibilities and are made aware of the fire hazards and risks facing the church building and congregation and are familiar with the emergency evacuation procedure and the use of the firefighting equipment.

The Chairman has the responsibility for ensuring that all Committee members are capable of carrying out their fire marshal responsibilities. It is the duty of the Chairman to ensure that all Committee members are familiar with the layout of the church building, firefighting equipment and escape routes. He should coordinate any suggestions and/or comments regarding fire hazards that come to his notice to the committee and seek urgent attention and modifications to fire safety procedures.

5. Every Committee member shall have complete understanding of the fire plan and their respective responsibility for ensuring the safe and orderly evacuation of the congregation, in the event of a fire, to the designated safe area using the fire escape routes identified. Each Committee member is allocated a fire exit to manage and a role in the event of a fire.

C. FIRE RISKS: POSSIBLE SOURCES of FIRE

6. The following main fire risk areas were identified:

Main Church: i) Candles; Congregation holding lit candles

Risk Management: Ensure that congregation is made aware of dangers of lit candles before the start of the ceremony. Committee members being alert to the dangers and reducing the number of candles placed on the candleholders.

Main Electrics Switchboard situated in main entrance of building:

Risk management: Ensure regular inspections and electricity certificates and door to unit closed.

Children playing with candles

Risk management: Teach children dangers of playing with lit candles and never leave children unsupervised.

Upstairs landing housing the gas central heating boiler:

Risk Management: Keep clean and tidy. Ensure regular servicing.

D. ROUTES of ESCAPE and APPLIANCES: PREPAREDNESS

7. All Committee members should be made aware of fire escape routes. There are 3 main Fire exit routes from main Church floor: Front Main Middle Exit, Back of Church fire exit and Front of Church side door fire exit.

- i) **Fire Exits:** Ensure that they are all clearly marked and free of obstruction and can open easily.
- ii) **Fire Fighting Appliances:** All Committee members should know the location of these and all should know how to use them. These appliances shall be serviced annually and the certificate kept by the Church Treasurer.
- iii) **Fire Alarm.** (Part of the Sound System). This should be regularly tested, at least 2 times a month. The date and time of test should be entered into a log Book, together with any observations.
- iv) **Telephone:** Ensure telephone is always in working order by main entrance of Church Building. In the event of a fire, to dial 999 and ask for Fire brigade, giving address as “The Greek Orthodox Church of Coventry, Westwood Heath Road, Westwood Heath, CV4 8GP, near Westwood Social Club”.

FIRE PLAN and PROCEDURES:

8. The prime aim of the Committee members, in the event of a fire is the safe and orderly evacuation of the congregation to a safe area away from the main church building and away from any parked cars. To ensure that no one is allowed to enter into his or her car, which is within the perimeter of the church, and to move to an area outside the main gate of the church, by the car park of the Social Cub.

- a) In the event of a fire, Committee Members shall try to put it out using the firefighting equipment available. In the event of an uncontrollable, fire Committee members must shout loud and clear “FIRE, FIRE, FIRE. EVACUTE THE BUILDING”
- b) The person assisting the priest in the Sanctuary will be instructed to set off the alarm, which is part of the amplifier system and then to assist with the evacuation of the congregation from the Front of Church Side Fire Exit.
- c) The Chairman or person deputising for him on the day must ensure someone dials 999 and ask for Fire brigade, giving the address as “The Greek Orthodox Church of Coventry, Westwood Heath Road, Westwood Heath, CV4 8GP, near Westwood Social Club”. The same person shall check and ensure that all toilets and coffee room are clear.

- d) **Committee Members manning the main fire exits will ask the congregation to leave by the nearest exits and ask them to congregate by the Social Club, away from the main entrance and the road, so as not to obstruct the emergency services.**
- e) **On the complete evacuation of the building the Committee members shall also assemble by the Social Club and help with the pacifying of the congregation.**
- f) **A Committee member will be by the main gate ensuring the orderly gathering by the social club and that no member of the congregation tries to drive away in their car, thus creating a bottleneck and hindering the free flow of people and emergency services.**

ASSEMBLY AREA

9. The Congregation must remain at the assembly area until the all clear is given by the fire services.

HEADCOUNT/RECORDING of FINDINGS

10. Each Committee member present must ensure that the entire congregation known is accounted for and to make themselves available to the emergency services as needed.

LEARNING POINTS

11. A meeting of the full Committee shall be called the first Wednesday after the fire to discuss the event and to record all the learning points with the main aim of reviewing the Fire Plan as and if required.

Date Reviewed: 9 January 2019

Date Adopted By the Church Committee: 6 February 2019.

Signed: