

**Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
East Cheshire Area Meeting (ECAM)**

**Health and Safety Schedule for Meeting Houses,  
Premises Used for Worship or Visits to Hired Premises**

**What needs to be done?**

The purpose of this Schedule is to help Local Meetings complete a Health and Safety Risk Assessment, of their place of worship, whether hired or owned by the Society of Friends. This Schedule accompanies the Health and Safety Policy written by East Cheshire Area Meeting Trustees.

This guidance is provided for Health and Safety procedures in order to take care of each other, visitors to our places of worship, and the premises we use or hire for residential occasions.

**Risk Assessment**

- ❑ Using this Schedule for guidance, each year, Local Meetings are required to carry out (or review a previous) Risk Assessment for their Meeting House, hired premises used for worship or other buildings owned by East Cheshire Area Meeting.
- ❑ Each year the outcome of the Risk Assessment should be shared with Friends and Attenders at each Local Meeting and a copy of the Risk Assessment sent to the East Cheshire Area Meeting Clerk of Trustees.
- ❑ An example risk assessment for a place of worship is attached to this Schedule.
- ❑ Local Meetings are advised to complete risk assessments for activities held away from usual premises for example - residential visits or children's excursions. Premises to be hired or to be visited usually have their own risk assessment for visitors which can be read and amended where needed by Friends organizing an occasion.

**Topics for Risk Assessment:**

**Many of the topics below will need to be included in each Local Meeting's Risk Assessment. Not all will be necessary. Selection will be made according to the how the premises are used, the needs of the Local Meeting, and the age and condition of the building.**

**Accidents**

- ❑ All accidents should be recorded in an Accident Book kept on the premises.
- ❑ Injuries or accidents should be notified to the Local Meeting person responsible for Health and Safety and the Clerk of that Meeting. Serious accidents must be reported to the clerk to ECAM Trustees and to the enforcing authority. Please refer to the Policy for guidance.

**Danger or Hazards, Slips and Trips**

- ❑ The Friends entering premises before others are due to attend, should check that all is safe, for the meeting or event to proceed. (Not all our premises are in daily use)
- ❑ Any source of danger should be reported to a member of the Meeting House Premises Committee.
- ❑ Ensure all walk areas are free from possible causes of a Friend slipping or tripping over a hazard that need to be rectified. (Furniture, equipment, wet floors e.t.c.)

### **Exits and Entrances**

- ❑ Exits should be kept clear of obstructions. All emergency exits must be clearly marked with an exit sign.

### **Storage Areas**

- ❑ Should be accessible, avoiding blockages or excessive storage that could cause items to fall on the user.

### **Working or Visiting a Building Alone: Lone Working**

- ❑ When working or visiting a building alone, Friends and Employees need to be aware of potential dangers. Each individual should be aware of how they can keep themselves safe, and what can be done to ensure Friends and Employees reduce the likelihood of accidents occurring and help being difficult to secure.

#### Employees or Volunteer Wardens

- ⇒ The Lone Worker Risk Assessment is particularly important for Employees or Volunteers who regularly work alone in our buildings or on site. An example of a lone worker Risk Assessment is attached.
- ⇒ It is recommended that this is used as a practical document for a discussion and walk about the site, considering and writing down how hazards can be avoided, and any steps for safety that should be taken.

#### Volunteers

- ❑ When working or volunteering in a building alone, individuals should ensure that another Friend knows they are in the building alone.
- ❑ Friends must decide whether to work or volunteer with another person.
- ❑ Each person must assess they feel well enough to carry out the tasks intended. This is particularly important when Friends are older and more vulnerable.
- ❑ Lone volunteers are advised to keep a mobile phone accessible and be able to contact emergency services, local Friends or their family, should an emergency arise.
- ❑ Local Meetings should have an agreed procedure in order to keep volunteers safe should a visitor call. If an incident arises where a lone worker or volunteer feels unsafe arising from a visitor calling, this should be reported to the Local Meeting Clerk and the person responsible for Health and Safety.

### **Telephones and Mobiles**

- ❑ If the Meeting House does not have a land line telephone, Friends should be made aware of this and ensure there is access to a mobile phone.
- ❑ A notice with emergency and local contacts should be displayed on the premises

- ❑ Friends visiting the premises on their own are requested to have a mobile with them and ensure they have appropriate contact numbers on the phone in case of an emergency.

### **First Aid**

- ❑ The First Aid Box should be clearly marked and kept in an accessible position. Signage must show where the box is to be found. It should be dust and damp proof.
- ❑ There is no legal requirement for the First Aid Box to contain particular items. We recommend, as a minimum, the following items:
  - ⇒ a leaflet giving general advice on first aid (such as the Health and Safety Executive leaflet *Basic advice on first aid at work*)
  - ⇒ sterile wound cleansers
  - ⇒ a triangular bandage
  - ⇒ assorted individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings
  - ⇒ two sterile eye patches
  - ⇒ individually wrapped sterile un-medicated wound dressings
  - ⇒ disposable gloves
  - ⇒ crepe bandages
  - ⇒ gauze bandages
  - ⇒ scissors
  - ⇒ tweezers
- ❑ There should be a list of the contents in the First Aid Box.
- ❑ The contents of the First Aid Box should be checked every year for missing or out-of-date items.
- ❑ If possible, the First Aid Box should contain the names of any members with current first aid qualifications.
- ❑ Friends should receive training from a qualified person on basic first aid and emergency aid every two to three years.

### **Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning**

- ❑ Building(s) should be well ventilated when in use. This is particularly important when cleaning materials that give off fumes are being used.
- ❑ Are there windows that can be opened?
- ❑ Is there an air extraction or ventilation system? Is it working properly, does it need servicing?
- ❑ Is there an air conditioning system? Is it professionally serviced to ensure the coolants comply with regulations? Systems over 12Kw must be inspected every five years.
- ❑ Buildings(s) should be adequately heated when in use.
- ❑ Employees and members of the Premises Committee should be shown how to operate the heating controls in order to maintain a suitable working and meeting environment.

### **Asbestos Management**

- ❑ **Do you know if an Asbestos Survey has been completed?** A professionally written plan, identifying what type of asbestos is present and how it must be managed. **Trustees are looking into this issue to see when the last Asbestos Surveys were**

**completed and are considering commissioning surveys for the ECAM Meeting Houses.**

- Local Meetings hiring premises should ask a representative of the building they hire whether an asbestos survey has been completed and is an Asbestos Management Plan available, for hirers to read?**
- Does the Quinquennial Inspection of the building mention asbestos presence, a survey or any observations regarding asbestos?  
*For Information*
- Asbestos can be in older buildings (pre 21<sup>st</sup> Century) for example:- within floor or ceiling tiles, insulation, "aertex" paints, pipe surrounds?*
- If there is asbestos present it is usually only dangerous when building modifications or renovation work is on-going and asbestos particles get into the air and can be breathed in by anyone using the building unless precautionary measures are taken.*

### **Lighting**

- Building(s) and areas around building(s) should be adequately lit when in use. This should include emergency lighting where necessary.
- Does external lighting switch on by sensors to enable safe entry or departure in the dark?
- Emergency Lighting:- see notes under **Fire Safety**.

### **Gas**

- Gas Safety Certificate and Gas Appliance Service : Annual Inspection

#### **Gas Safety Certificate**

This is a safety check that landlords are required to obtain and display to check the following:

- Gas leakages - Gas combustion - Operating pressure is correct - Burning gas correctly
- Ventilation routes are effective and clear

#### **Gas Appliance Service**

- A gas appliance service is a much more comprehensive inspection checking the appliance's internal components, done by removing the gas appliance cover, taking the appliance apart, and performing a full inspection of every single part.

#### **Gas "Turn Off" Location**

- A sign is needed** to show where to turn off the gas in emergency.

#### **Gas Boilers (or Oil Fired Boilers)**

- Access to rooms containing boilers should not be blocked, but should be restricted or locked.
- Boiler rooms should be adequately ventilated.
- The ventilation behind the boiler should not be blocked.
- Boilers should be inspected and serviced annually by a qualified contractor

#### **Carbon Monoxide and Detectors**

- ❑ A highly dangerous colourless odourless gas, which can kill.
- ❑ Take advice from the professional who conducts the annual gas checks for your building whether Carbon Monoxide detectors should be fitted (depending on the gas appliances and location in the building).
- ❑ If a Carbon Monoxide detector sounds (due to a fault in a gas appliance) the premises should be immediately evacuated, ventilated and the gas turned off.
- ❑ Group leaders/persons in charge using BBQ s must remain alert to their use external to premises only, in well ventilated spaces, and possible dangers of fire hazards.

### **Water**

- ❑ A sign is needed to show where to turn off the water in case of emergency.
- ❑ Hot water must be available in the kitchen and toilet areas when the buildings are in use. Warning signs may be needed if the Hot Water supply is particularly hot.(to prevent Legionella)
- ❑ Legionella Management: The disease (a type of pneumonia) can be contracted from small droplets of contaminated water in shower systems, humidifiers, water taps or faulty air conditioning units.
- ❑ Prevention of Legionella: Flush water taps/shower systems through regularly, ensure hot water temperatures are above 60 C.

### **Electrical Equipment and fittings**

- ❑ A sign must show where to turn off the electricity in case of emergency.
- ❑ All electrical installations must be professionally installed and professionally maintained.
- ❑ Sockets must not be overloaded by the use of adapters: extra sockets should be installed.
- ❑ Electrical cables, plugs and sockets should be checked regularly for damage.
- ❑ There should be no trailing electrical cables for people to trip over.
- ❑ When was the last Fixed Wire Inspection completed? There should be a written report and a certificate of inspection.
- ❑ Fixed Wire Inspection means inspection of hard wired circuits, panels and distribution boards. It is recommended for Meeting Houses or places of worship; this should be done every 5 years.
- ❑ The report will be either “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” listing remedial work required. If there are unsatisfactory issues they need immediate attention, as the building is being declared unsafe.
- ❑ Portable equipment testing, or “PAT” testing, must be undertaken every two to three years, where every appliance plug is tested. More frequent tests can be done for appliances in regular use. Keep alert to the possibility of worn cables or damaged plugs is essential.
- ❑ Equipment brought onto the premises by hirers or visiting Friends should be PAT tested.

## **Fire Safety**

### **Fire Risk Assessment**

- ❑ It is a legal requirement to conduct a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA). The law does not state who can carry out the FRA but it should be done by a competent person who is familiar with risk assessments. It must be written down and displayed, or a notice giving the key points - stating where the full plan is accessible for reading.
- ❑ It must be reviewed regularly at no more than 12 months. A new one must be obtained at change of use or layout.
- ❑ The Fire Risk Assessment must cover the issues below:-

### **Fire Drills and Evacuation**

- ❑ Each building must have a “**Fire Evacuation Plan**”.
- ❑ **Fire Evacuation Plan**:-The escape routes and procedures for evacuation and responsibilities and the Meeting Point or assembly point. It is a legal requirement and must be updated each year.
- ❑ **Fire Evacuation Plan**:-identifies persons responsible ( e.g. a **Fire Marshall**) and their roles.
- ❑ **A Fire Marshall (s) must be identified each time a building is used, by the Clerk of the Meeting or person responsible for the meeting/gathering, to those present.**
- ❑ We need to identify who the Fire Marshall(s) are within the routine Health and Safety instructions at the beginning of the session or gathering.
- ❑ To be explicit the Clerk for the occasion could say.....“If the alarm sounds..... the exits are.....the Fire Marshall is...the meeting point is located...”)
- ❑ For all the gatherings a Fire Marshall must be identified:-**Meetings for Worship, Area Meetings, Discussion Groups, Elders and Overseers meetings, Trustee meetings, use by all Hirers, Teenage General Meetings, Regional Gatherings. the Fire Marshall checks the building is clear and guides/directs people to the exits** . A member of the Local Meeting, who knows the building is often well suited to this role.
- ❑ **The Fire Marshall(s) Role This is a change of practice.**
  1. Ensures that each floor, toilets, kitchen, office, stores and children’s rooms to ensure all are clear , directing Friends to appropriate exits
  2. Leaves the building, checking all fire doors closed.
  3. Goes to the Meeting Point, checks with other people that all people are clear
  4. PHONES the Fire Service, if another Friend has not done so.
- ❑ Fire Fighting Equipment: It is a legal requirement to ensure there is fire fighting equipment on our sites, BUT getting out of danger is more important.
- ❑ Quaker gatherings such as the examples listed above, must ensure there is a policy for Fire Evacuation, understood by the Clerk and written into their planning or mode of operation.

- ❑ For Quaker Meetings for Worship, where Friends are familiar with the Meeting House, this is likely to need a number of people who are ready to adopt the role, for each event or Meeting. It may be practical for the door keeper to be the Fire Marshall. For buildings with two floors or a number of rooms, the Fire Marshall will need another person or persons to ensure the building is clear, so that the Fire Marshalls can do their checks and get out quickly.
- ❑ **Fire Evacuation Plan:-**
- ❑ Lists where and what type of firefighting appliance is kept the appliances must be checked professionally each year and the date of inspection recorded.
- ❑ Regular fire practices should be held and recorded. People leaving the building immediately.
- ❑ A notice “**In case of fire**” should be displayed prominently.
- ❑ If a **smoke alarm sounds** the premises must be evacuated.
- ❑ **Fire doors should not be locked** when the building is in use, exits must be clear internally and externally.
- ❑ Doorways must **enable wheelchair users or less mobile people to evacuate easily** ( e.g. a suggestion is that double doors internal or external both unlocked when building in use).
- ❑ Meeting Houses must have appropriate fire extinguishers and fire blankets, which are **professionally checked and serviced annually**.
- ❑ A **fire log book** should be maintained accurately recording the dates of all the above tests and inspections.
- ❑ Fire doors should be closed when a room is empty.
- ❑ Employees should be shown how to use the equipment. BUT the priority in the case of Fire, should be for all people to evacuate and call the Fire Service.
- ❑ **Information re fire prevention** and action for Hirers about evacuating the building should be included in the **Hiring Booking Form**.
- ❑ The requirement and role of a Fire Marshall **must be explicit in HIRE DOCUMENTS**.

### **Fire Alarms**

- ❑ Alarm points must be tested weekly and on rotation, in order that within a 13 week period all have been checked, and the test dates recorded.
- ❑ Every six months:- A full service must be carried out half yearly by an external specialist company.

### **Emergency Lighting**

- ❑ Types of Emergency Lighting in your building?
- ❑ Non-Maintained: Light comes on in a power failure only using a battery backup.
- ❑ Maintained: Permanently lit emergency lights, usually installed to prevent complete black outs.

- Monthly Testing:- all emergency lights must be tested on a monthly basis, and recorded in the Fire Log Book, turn them on or use a “fish key” and check they are working.
- Annual Testing: the backup battery must be tested each year and allowed to fully discharge to ensure the lights stay on after three hours.

### **Smoking and Lit Flames**

- Smoking should not be allowed anywhere in the building or external premises.
- Use of candles or nightlights are not advised. If used, never to be left burning unattended, as at the time of their use they will negate the Insurance Policies in place by the Society of Friends.
- Use of fires (e.g. fire pits ) or BBQs in Meeting House gardens or outdoor visits should be competently managed to ensure people and premises are safe.
- Check that HIRE DOCUMENTS show the need for extreme care, with naked flames.

### **Cleaning, hazardous substances, equipment and care of the individual**

- Cleaning chemicals and any other hazardous substances should be kept locked away.
- The Meeting should ensure that any employee has been instructed in the use of hazardous substances. Is protective clothing advised and available?
- Employees with known conditions that can be aggravated by cleaning materials or cleaning procedures, should ensure the employer knows and alternatives considered.
- All hazardous equipment – such as gardening equipment – should be kept locked away when not in use.
- All cleaning and gardening equipment should be kept in good condition and regularly reviewed by the Premises Committee

### **External Areas**

- Car parks, access to roads and moving vehicles may be a hazard to be noted.
- Garden areas, pathways, graveyards or steps may be need to be in the risk assessment.

### **Kitchens and Toilets**

- Friends and Employees must keep aware of the possible transmission of infection and maintain high standards of hygiene.
- Equipment used for cleaning the toilets (e.g. mops and cloths) must not be used for cleaning in the kitchen.
- Kitchens are a likely area for accidents, through normal use of cookers, hot water, water on floors, rubbish disposal, food preparation and so on.

- ❑ Kitchen areas should be restricted to those people carrying out duties, access by children is not advised or Friends pursuing discussions!

### **Working above floor level**

- ❑ To reach high objects stepladders, and not chairs, must be used.
- ❑ No one should go above the second step of a ladder or stepladder unless it is being held by someone else.
- ❑ Ladders, stepladders, and other equipment should be maintained in a safe condition.

### **Children**

- ❑ Children are at particular risk. When children are present, danger areas in meeting houses - such as stairs - should be supervised carefully.
- ❑ Children should be asked not to enter small busy kitchen spaces.
- ❑ Hazardous objects - such as plastic bags and cleaning materials - should not be accessible to children.
- ❑ Parents or carers should always supervise children when access to outside spaces is given to children.
- ❑ Local Friends are asked to ensure parents or carers are made aware of any hazards particular to the site, whether within or outside the building.
- ❑ Safeguarding of children and vulnerable people is covered in a separate policy which Friends should read and observe.

### **Childbirth**

- ❑ No employee or volunteer may work until two weeks after childbirth.

### **Training in Tasks and Safeguarding**

- ❑ Training must be given to tasks that incur a risk.
- ❑ Safeguarding procedures and training should be checked annually, knowledge and practice updated as decided by the person named for Health and Safety.

### **Day or Residential Visits, Local Meeting Events**

- ❑ Risk Assessments for Local Meeting Visits or events, including external witness events should be completed and retained for reference. Centres of interest usually have risk assessments that visitors can use and adapt.

### **Review of this Schedule**

Comments regarding this schedule in order to assist ECAM Trustees keeping it clear and up to date can be sent to the Clerk to Trustees or the Trustee for Health and Safety.

*This Schedule has been updated by Gavin Mendham and Gill Alcock on behalf of East Cheshire Area Meeting Trustees. 16<sup>th</sup> August 2019. It should be reviewed again in 2024.*