

# ***Kingdom Hall Manual***

***September 2009***

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## Introduction

This *Manual* has been produced to help bodies of elders and operating committees care for the Kingdom Hall so that it continues to be a comfortable, dignified and modest place in which to give praise to Jehovah. (Psalm 122:1) It covers all the issues normally encountered, and contains all the forms needed, in connection with the operation of Kingdom Halls. It supersedes all previous letters in connection with Kingdom Hall operation and the Kingdom Hall Assistance Arrangement other than those referred to herein.

One copy of this *Manual* should be kept in each congregation's file after circulation around the body of elders. Each member of the operating committee should also have a copy.

The information in this *Manual* is provided in an effort to be helpful, but is not a comprehensive guide to elders' legal responsibilities. We are unable to accept liability for the consequences of any errors or omissions.

## Operating Committee

### Overview

The elders supervise the upkeep and maintenance of the Kingdom Hall. When two or more congregations use the same hall, the bodies of elders appoint an operating committee composed of capable elders or ministerial servants. This committee works entirely under the direction of the bodies of elders.

The operating committee should take the lead in caring for the Kingdom Hall, see to it that there are sufficient supplies on hand, and make sure no hazardous conditions exist in the hall or the grounds.

The brothers selected to serve on the operating committee must be (1) spiritual men, and (2) available.—Acts 6:3, 4; *The Watchtower* October 15, 1992, page 23, paragraph 5.

The congregations sharing a Kingdom Hall should have **equal** representation on the operating committee.

One member of the committee should be designated to care for all day-to-day matters in connection with the operation of the hall. He should be given the authority to care for repairs, the replenishing of supplies, and so forth, which do not involve alterations to the Kingdom Hall or spending large sums of money. A permanent chairman, an elder if possible, should be appointed by the bodies of elders. He should have good organizational ability, be able to take the initiative, and be quick to expedite matters. He should not be a procrastinator.

The operating committee should select a brother to inspect the Kingdom Hall in accordance with the annual *Fire Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Worksheet* (T-34) every September.

If the operating committee comes up against difficult questions or unanticipated major expenditures, these should be referred to the whole group of elders for determination. If the elders feel that a major expenditure is advisable, their recommendation should be outlined to the respective congregations, setting forth the facts, including the anticipated costs. A final decision will then be made by means of a resolution.

NOTE: Where only a single congregation uses a Kingdom Hall it may only be necessary for one elder or ministerial servant to carry out the responsibilities of the operating committee. However, for the sake of simplicity, the term "operating committee" has been used throughout these guidelines. Of course, if only one brother cares for this assignment, the body of elders should be especially observant to ensure that the responsibilities of the assignment are cared for.

## Operating Account

Each congregation should contribute an agreed-upon amount monthly for Kingdom Hall operation. All the elders of congregations meeting in the hall should discuss and agree an appropriate monthly payment to cover operating expenses and any loan repayment. This amount will then be presented to the congregation(s) for a decision to be made. As necessary, and as seems advisable, adjustments can be made in the amount sent to this fund by each congregation. Where all congregations using a Kingdom Hall are about the same size, they may all decide to remit the same amount monthly. Where there is a considerable size difference, the larger congregation(s) might lovingly decide to contribute a larger portion monthly.

The account should be set up, kept and audited in accordance with the current *Instructions for Congregation Accounting* (S-27) and the instructions *Congregation Annual Accounts—Charity Commission Requirements* together with the accompanying *Guidance Notes—Congregation Annual Accounts—Requirements for Registered Charities* as provided to each congregation by the branch office.

A cut-off point for how much can be spent on normal operations without special approval should be established by the body/bodies of elders.

A copy of the *Monthly Congregation Accounts Report* (S-30) for the operating account should be given to each body of elders.

The committee member appointed to care for day-to-day operational matters will need to be provided with adequate resources to care for necessary purchases. (See *The Watchtower* October 15, 1992, page 23.) He should provide receipts for funds spent.

## Operating File

The operating committee keeps a file of information relevant to the safety, maintenance and general operation of the Kingdom Hall. The appropriate records should be available to those authorized when maintenance or equipment servicing takes place. This file would include items such as:

- Installation guides, user instructions, maintenance instructions etc.
- Maintenance and servicing records.
- Plans/as-built drawings of the building.
- Copies of completed forms (see back of this *Manual*) including the annual *Fire Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Worksheet* (T-34).
- Completed report regarding potential asbestos containing materials in the building.

NOTE: On new Kingdom Hall projects, the Regional Building Committee will produce a document containing the above noted information, which in the construction industry is called a “Health and Safety file.”

## Biennial Kingdom Hall Inspection

The Regional Building Committee will perform a thorough inspection of each Kingdom Hall in their area of operation at least once every two years. This will provide an opportunity to review the condition of each Kingdom Hall and offer suggestions if needed. It will also enable them to better coordinate plans for future Kingdom Hall construction within the region. This arrangement should help conserve dedicated funds that can be used for the worldwide work. The chairman of the operating committee should accompany the Regional Building Committee representative when the inspection is carried out. Thereafter, a written report will be prepared by the Regional Building Committee representative and given to the body of elders of each congregation using the hall, as well as the circuit over-

seer. In this way, all will be alerted to any areas of concern, so that these may be given prompt attention.

## Ownership

No one congregation should feel that it “owns” the Kingdom Hall. It is dedicated to Jehovah’s worship. The congregation that builds or rents a building has committed into its care a trust in connection with the hall, and the body of elders has the responsibility to manage wisely the Kingdom Hall’s operation so that Kingdom interests are best served. In many instances, several congregations share the same Kingdom Hall in order to get full use of the facilities and to keep down expenses. The branch office deals with only one of the congregations as far as property matters are concerned, and this congregation is the one that holds title to the Kingdom Hall property.

### Written Agreement

When more than one congregation uses the hall, it is best for all the elders in the congregations involved to meet and decide Kingdom Hall matters. In this way, problems resulting from lack of communication or representation are kept to a minimum. Thus, there is a common sharing of the building dedicated to Jehovah’s service, and there is common responsibility to take good care of it. Under this arrangement no one congregation dominates while others become mere “tenants.” The agreement describing how the building will be cared for and used and when meetings will be held and what will be the responsibility of each congregation financially and otherwise should be in writing, with a copy for each congregation’s file, since elders may move and subsequent elders may not be aware of any oral understanding.

## Selecting Meeting Times

When there is only one congregation meeting in a Kingdom Hall, the elders should consider what they feel will be the best times for the meetings and should present their recommendations to the congregation for discussion, possible adjustment, and final decision (by majority vote of the baptized publishers), making the times as convenient as possible for the majority. However, in line with what is stated above, when more than one congregation meets in the hall, the elders of all the congregations may wish to meet and discuss meeting-time preferences to work out the best arrangements for all concerned. Where there is a choice in the times of meetings, the decision rests not simply with the elders but with each congregation. Some congregations find that rotating the times of meetings, or offering to do so every year or so, is desirable. When a rotation is made, it should take place on the first of January. (*Our Kingdom Ministry*, December 1994, page 2.) Good communication and cooperation contribute to mutual understanding and contentment, preventing the feeling that one congregation has certain advantages all the time. Good cooperation is also needed in connection with meetings during the circuit overseer’s visit, weddings, and so forth.

## Trustees

The law differs in detail in Scotland from England and Wales. Generally however, all Kingdom Hall property, whether freehold or leasehold, is held by trustees on behalf of the congregation that, for legal purposes, records ownership of the property. This is a **separate** arrangement from that whereby elders serve as “Charity Trustees” for each congregation.

Local brothers may act as trustees for the Kingdom Hall. Alternatively, the Kingdom Hall Trust may act as a Custodian Trustee, whereby the legal title is held at the branch office on behalf of the congregation. This arrangement is progressively being expanded by the branch office as appropriate.

For a detailed consideration of the role and responsibilities of Charity Trustees, see *CC3 – The Essential Trustee: What you need to know* published by the Charity Commission.—[www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk).

If you have queries in this regard, or if you become aware that your current trustee arrangement is not up to date, please write to the Legal Department at the branch office.

## Cleaning

The Kingdom Hall should be cleaned according to a regular schedule, depending on its use and needs. All may have a share, even the children. (Children should be properly supervised by their parents and must not be given access to any hazardous substances.) In this way all will learn the responsibility attached to the upkeep of the Kingdom Hall and will appreciate it more. Usually cleaning is arranged according to field service group. The elders may wish to make a schedule so that groups, under the direction of the group overseer or another brother in the group, may rotate weekly in looking after the cleaning. A list of things to be done may be placed on the noticeboard. Supplies and equipment should be on hand for use in cleaning. With all having a part in caring for the hall, the burden will not fall on just a few.

Periodic intensive cleaning required for areas of the building such as guttering and soft furnishings (wet cleaning) should be carefully organized so that it is safe. Please refer to the Maintenance and Safety sections of this *Manual*.

## Maintenance

The Kingdom Hall should be given regular attention. Does it need painting inside or out? Are repairs needed? Does the car park need attention? Is there sufficient security? If there is a garden, is it regularly maintained? Is the property being treated with proper respect?

An annual inspection should be carried out in September. Any matters that require attention should be dealt with promptly. The appended *Fire Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Worksheet* (T-34) provides further information and instructions in this regard.

If additional advice is needed in caring for maintenance of the Kingdom Hall, the elders should contact the Regional Building Committee. This might include matters such as carpet care, remedying of damp problems, servicing/testing of the electrical installation, the heating/air-conditioning system, the boiler, and any fire or security alarm. (Gas and electrical work must be carried out by competent people. Registration under the Gas Safe Register is legally required for gas work.)

It is best that unpaid volunteers perform maintenance work where possible. However, if it becomes necessary to hire a contractor to care for some work, such as pest control, the elders should:

- Seek competitive bids, from three or more companies, based on a detailed written description of the work to be performed and any materials to be supplied.
- Select the best tender and put the recommendation to the congregation(s). This procedure should be followed even if a brother has offered to do the work or supply the needed materials at a specified price.
- Confirm the contractor has adequate liability insurance before work is carried out.

## Waste Collection Arrangements

Kingdom Halls, as places of worship, are entitled to have refuse collected by the Local Authority without charge. If charges have been made, the Local Authority must reimburse the congregation.

Some congregations already receive free refuse disposal. In this situation, no further action is necessary. Other congregations have decided that it is not necessary to obtain regular refuse collection, perhaps due to the small amount of waste produced or because of the site usually being locked. In some cases where no refuse collection arrangements appear to be in place, the Local Authority has challenged the congregation to prove that illegal waste disposal is not taking place. If this occurs, please contact the branch office for advice.

### Sanitary Waste Collection

There is no requirement for Kingdom Halls to have any specific arrangements or a contract for sanitary waste to be removed from the Kingdom Hall.

## Supply of Electricity and Gas

Congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses are classed as charity (non-business activity) users with regard to the supply of utilities. Thus, VAT should be charged at 5% rather than the current business rate. Any overpayment should be reclaimed from your utility supplier(s).

Some congregations have made considerable financial savings by carefully selecting their supplier(s) of electricity and gas. You may find that dedicated resources can be used more effectively.

## Registering as Places of Worship and for Marriages

### England and Wales

Kingdom Halls must be certified as places of worship. One benefit is that they are thus exempt from business rates. Therefore it is good to register as soon as a new Kingdom Hall is completed.

When a congregation stops using a Kingdom Hall, builds a new hall, or carries out structural alterations to an existing hall, the General Register Office should be advised.—Telephone 0151 471 4803.

Kingdom Halls certified as places of worship can also be registered for the solemnization of marriages. Information regarding the necessary action to take and the appropriate forms to complete can be obtained from the superintendent registrar at your local register office. Kingdom Halls registered for marriages are required to have a safe in which to store the marriage registers. The safe must be of solid metal construction, fireproof to one hour, with internal dimensions of 45 x 30cm (18" x 12") and, ideally, bolted to the floor. There should not be more than two key (or lock combination) holders. If required the Regional Building Committees have details of a safe that meets these criteria.

### Scotland

When a new hall is built or an existing hall is structurally altered, the Local Authority can advise on necessary procedures. Regarding the solemnization of marriages, it is the individual that is registered rather than the building. If information on the appointment procedure is required, please write to the branch office.



## Seating

Chairs in Kingdom Hall auditoriums should be linked (or floor fixed). This prevents individual chairs being moved out of position, which could inhibit safe exit from the building during an emergency. If chairs are not linked, the elders should ascertain if linking is possible. If this cannot be achieved, the situation should be managed so as to minimize any risks to safety. If clarification is required, please contact the Regional Building Committee.

Please note the following recommendations (which are not retrospective):

- Any aisles should be at least 1050mm in width.
- There should be at least 300mm clear width between the top back edge of one row of chairs and the front of the row behind.
- If there are requests for wheelchairs, pushchairs or folding chairs to be brought into the auditorium, it is essential to take a reasonable and practical attitude so that as many as possible can benefit from the meetings. Escape routes should be kept clear and any chairs brought into the hall should be safe to use and not detract from the dignity of the hall. Discernment and tact will enable those who have a genuine need to be cared for in a reasonable and loving manner.

## First Aid

Kingdom Halls are not required by law to keep a first aid box on the premises. If the body/bodies of elders choose to make such a provision, ensure that the contents are properly maintained. Such a kit would normally contain sterile hypo-allergenic plasters, eye pads, eyewash solution, triangular bandages, safety pins, medium and large dressings, individually wrapped wipes, disposable vinyl or blue nitrile examination gloves (not latex because of allergy) and a roll of microporous tape. The quantities should be based on the size of the congregation and the history of need. A simple (mouth-to-mouth) resuscitation protector is also advisable. The kit should be regularly checked to ensure all items are present and that the use-by date has not expired. Once something is used, it should be replaced. If food preparation is occasionally carried on at the Kingdom Hall, such as for pioneer schools, blue plasters should be available.

A simple biohazard spill kit is advisable for safe clean-up of body fluids such as vomit.

There is no legal requirement to have an appointed first aider at a meeting at a Kingdom Hall. The body/bodies of elders may, however, consider it appropriate to do so.

During construction or maintenance of a Kingdom Hall property, although every effort should be made to prevent accidents from occurring, arrangements for dealing with injury should be thought through before work starts. During construction involving the Regional Building Committee, qualified first aid volunteers should be present and be suitably equipped. The public emergency services should promptly be called upon to handle a medical emergency.

## Fire Prevention

Give careful attention to the annual *Fire Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Worksheet* (T-34), which addresses fire and arson risk. The elders must always be mindful of the fire risk and evacuation elements of this worksheet.

### **Decision-Making at the Time of a Chubb Engineer Visit**

Choose a responsible brother to open the Kingdom Hall for the Chubb engineer. This brother should be able to approve the replacement of defective or missing extinguishers *at the time of inspection*. The engineer will explain to the brother opening the Kingdom



Hall what is needed and why. If the brother is satisfied—say for example he sees there is a defect in one of the extinguishers—he will be able to authorize immediate replacement because the price of new equipment is now very low, so there is no need to be afraid that the extinguisher could be more economically obtained elsewhere. If the brother is not satisfied with the need for a replacement, or if there are new items that the engineer is recommending, such as wayfinding signs, the brother can ask that the recommendations be made in writing to the elders. Matters could then be decided in time for the next annual inspection if they are not urgent.

Please note that it is best to only approve the replacement of *one extinguisher per year* if minor defects can be tolerated in a second extinguisher. This is because the extinguisher cost is low, and the site visit and servicing costs are low, but there is a £25 minimum invoice charge in the new contract. (See table.) Thus, most benefit from this contract will be achieved if the replacement of extinguishers is staggered.

If there is a problem with your inspection or billing, or if you want to order from any recommendations, or change contact details, the first point of contact should be Clair Holoham on 0845 606 1155 or Chubb customer services on the same number.

### **Number and Type of Extinguishers Needed**

Our data from Chubb seems to indicate that many Kingdom Halls have too many extinguishers. The body of elders has the final say on what is needed, but, the more extinguishers you have, the more you will pay to service and replace them. In all Kingdom Halls of standard design we specify only 2 AFF (foam) and one carbon dioxide (for electrical risks) to cover the building. We see no need to have separate extinguishers for a boiler room and kitchen, especially as no cooking usually takes place in the latter. If it does, it might best be served by a fire blanket. The boiler room can be served by the extinguishers in the other parts of the Kingdom Hall if one or two suitable types are within 30m. If you have more fire extinguishers than this, please carefully consider whether you can reduce them by reference to the guidance below.

Dry powder extinguishers have operational disadvantages and we prefer carbon dioxide. Thus as the powder extinguishers go out of date we suggest replacing them with carbon dioxide if an extinguisher is still needed in that location. Fires involving the escape of gas are best dealt with by isolating the gas supply to the building along with evacuation. Extinguishers should not be used on such fires until the gas supply is isolated because there is a risk of explosion.

Engineers might recommend that extinguishers be located on every exit and adjacent to every fire hazard. This is not necessary! You might have to be quite firm with the extinguisher engineer on this point. The secular guidance is as follows:

- “The basic scale of provision of extinguishers where these are only primary first aid means of fire defense is that, on each storey, there should be at least two extinguishers.”—BS5306—8:2000 para. 6.2.
- “The provision of one [foam] extinguisher for approximately every 200m<sup>2</sup> of floor space, with a minimum of two extinguishers per floor, will normally be adequate.”—Fire Safety and Risk Assessment, Small and Medium Places of Assembly p55.
- “Extinguishers should be cited in such a way that it is not necessary to travel more than 30m from the site of the fire to reach an extinguisher.”—BS5306—8:2000 para. 7.3.
- “Normally, extinguishers should be located in conspicuous positions on brackets or stands where they will be readily seen by persons following an escape route. Sitting positions near to room exits, corridors, stairways, lobbies and landings are most suitable.”—BS5306—8:2000 para. 7.1.

## Sample Scale of Charges Under New Chubb Contract

Extinguisher	Type	Size	Recharge	Replace Contents	New Supply
Water	Standard	Up to 9l	£4.95	£0.50	£24.95
Water	With additive	Up to 9l	£4.95	£3.25	£32.95
Foam	AFFF	6l	£5.95	£4.25	£24.95
Carbon dioxide	Standard	2kg	—	£12.29	£29.95
Fire Blanket	Standard	1x1	—	—	£11.99

Service Attendance Fee	£12.50	Minimum Invoice Value	£25.00
Fixing extinguisher to wall	£3.95	Standard fixing bracket	£1.90
Wall fix signs	£2.50	Signs discount	35%
Abortive planned visit	£12.50		

## Fire Safety

The level of fire risk in Kingdom Halls is generally low as there is no smoking, the building occupants are always alert when they are in the building, and there are few other sources of ignition. However, a little carelessness in fire prevention could result in complete destruction of the Kingdom Hall. (James 3:5) This section constitutes the Kingdom Hall's fire risk assessment. (No forms, procedures, or checklists other than those referred to here are necessary.)

### Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation

Unlike the *Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act, 1974*, the *Regulatory Reform Act (Fire Safety Order) 2006*, does apply in full to each congregation. The body of elders is the "responsible person" under this Order. Following all aspects of this *Manual* closely with respect to fire will assist in fulfilling their legal duties. Two members of each congregation are chosen to receive training in fire safety and fire extinguisher use every three years at the circuit assembly. These ones thereby become competent to assist the body of elders in following the direction here. They can assist in completing the fire aspects of the annual *Fire Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Worksheet* (T-34). They can also take the lead in organizing the evacuation and, if appropriate in the circumstances, emergency fire fighting. Further, with this *Manual*, there are two copies of a check sheet for them called the *Competent Person's Check Sheet*. Give these to them to follow through on the checks specified therein. Records of these checks must be kept in the Kingdom Hall Maintenance File.

The *Kingdom Hall Fire Action Notice* supplied with this *Manual* must be completed and displayed on the noticeboard and brought to the attention of the congregation regularly. If local circumstances make the notice inappropriate in any way, adapt it or replace it with one of your own. A blank copy is provided to congregations with multi-language groups and to multi-language congregations for completion by hand.

Define a Fire Assembly Point at least 50 metres away from the building, where the brothers are safe from smoke, traffic and emergency vehicles.

Appoint elders to become incident controllers in the event of fire. There should be a cascade arrangement, so that it is clear who is next in line if the first brother(s) are not present. They will act quickly and calmly in an emergency.

The priorities of the **Incident Controller** are to:

- Commence evacuation immediately on fire alert.

- Ascertain whether there is a real fire or not while the evacuation proceeds. Do so carefully.
- Organize calling the fire brigade on 999 in the event of a fire.
- Inform the fire brigade on arrival about any who were not able to evacuate.
- If sure that there is no fire, authorize re-entry of the building. (If the fire brigade has been called, they will make this decision once the building has been declared safe.)
- Take any safe measures in the event of fire to minimize damage.
- Have complete oversight of the incident until the fire brigade arrives. Be available to assist in every matter they require.

Attendants act as **Fire Wardens** if the alarm is raised when they are on duty. They should:

- Immediately open exit doors and help all evacuate through the nearest safe exit.
- Quickly check all areas of the building including ancillary rooms and toilets. If anyone is found, instruct him or her to leave if they are able, and if not, help them to leave.
- Close doors and windows.
- Report to the Fire Assembly Point.

Whilst two members of each congregation have received branch approved training in the use of fire extinguishers, anyone who is able, may use a fire extinguisher. Of course it must be safe to do so, i.e. there is a clear evacuation route, the fire is not bigger than them, and there is no danger from smoke or heat. Those who have been trained should be especially alert to taking the lead in using the fire extinguisher.

Rehearse the evacuation procedure during a meeting once a year. The congregation can be forewarned. The elderly and infirm can stay inside and others could play their role, walking at their pace etc., to test the evacuation procedure.

Arson is the greatest fire hazard to Kingdom Halls, and protecting against it should be carefully considered in the annual inspection.

## Safety

Life is sacred. (Compare 1 Chronicles 11:17-19.) Protecting the health and safety of those volunteering to clean and maintain the Kingdom Hall is an important matter for all in the congregation, especially the elders. Accidents occasionally occur, but they could usually have been prevented by some basic preparation and forethought. This guidance is adapted from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) leaflet *An Introduction to Health And Safety* to help bodies of elders prevent accidents and ill health. Elders, as congregation trustees, have responsibility for all activities in connection with the Kingdom Hall, and this guidance will help them discharge these responsibilities safely.

Many safety and risk issues are dealt with on the annual *Fire Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Worksheet* (T-34). However, it is good for the operating committee to have such issues in mind throughout the year:

### Frequently Asked Questions

*Do health and safety laws apply to the Kingdom Hall or congregation?*

If volunteers working on a Kingdom Hall are not paid for their work, and if no legal relationship is intended between those volunteering and the trustees of the congregation, then no employment relationship exists and, therefore, the *Health And Safety at Work (etc.)*

*Act, 1974*, does not apply. However, we want to ensure health and safety is practised as if the full force of the law did apply.

*Can Local Authority or HSE inspectors enforce the law on our Kingdom Hall premises?*

Elders do not object to inspectors entering Kingdom Halls and making observations. However, such inspectors should be aware that, because there are no employers and employees, they do not normally have **enforceable** rights of entry under the *Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act, 1974*.

*Where can we get health and safety information from?*

Whilst the Regional Building Committee is a reliable source of safety guidance for work on Kingdom Halls, congregations, in fulfilling their responsibilities for safety, are entitled to obtain information from other reliable sources. Congregations can contact the HSE confidential telephone information service, *InfoLine*, on 0870 154 5500 or alternatively at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).

*Do we need to display any safety posters?*

No, there is no need for Kingdom Halls to display safety posters such as the *Health and Safety Law* poster.

*Do we have to report injuries taking place in the Kingdom Hall to the HSE?*

No, for the above reasons this is not necessary. However, they must be promptly reported to the branch office using the *Accident Notice (T-5)* that accompanies this *Manual*.

*Do we need to prepare a health and safety policy?*

No, for the reasons set out above.

## **Risk Assessment**

Risk assessment is the main tool used in safety legislation for controlling risk. A hazard is something that can cause harm. A risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody will be harmed by the hazard. A risk assessment is the means by which hazards are evaluated and suitable controls established. It identifies the hazards and who might be affected by them; evaluates the precautions in place and whether they can be improved; and identifies action points.

Following the guidance and completing the *Fire Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Worksheet (T-34)* in this *Manual* is the way to ensure that the great majority of risks in Kingdom Halls and their operation are properly assessed and controlled. Thus, there is usually no need for a separate risk assessment. If there are unusual risks at Kingdom Halls that are not dealt with in this *Manual*, or if non-routine activities such as construction or landscaping are being carried out, the Regional Building Committee should be contacted for advice.

## **Work at Height**

In industry, falls from height account for around 70 fatalities and 4,000 major injuries every year. One of the main causes is falls from ladders. Those carrying out tasks at height should use **appropriate equipment** and be **competent**. If activity at height is required, give attention to the following points:

- Make an assessment of the task to be carried out. Is there a way that work at height could be avoided?
- Will equipment appropriate for the task be used? There is now a wide range of access solutions available and something like an access tower or mobile elevating work platform might be safer than a ladder.
- Those using such equipment should be properly trained, managed and supervised.
- Sufficient protection, such as suitable personal protective equipment, should be used when working at height.

- The elders should consider the safety of work at height in simple cleaning and maintenance, such as taking down and putting up curtains or changing light bulbs. Is there a way to avoid working at height? Is the most appropriate equipment available to be used? Are those using it competent to do so? Would it be safer to use other equipment rather than a ladder?
- Does anyone go into the roof space? If so, this presents a **very serious hazard**. Could such access be avoided? If not, the body/bodies of elders must consider whether it is properly **boarded out** with suitable materials that are firmly fixed to the joists and able to take the full weight that may be imposed. If not, there must be some other arrangement to prevent falls from height. The best approach may be to establish access from below, through the ceiling, and prohibit access to the roof space. If the installation of proper boarding cannot be safely carried out, could a combination of partial boarding, nets, barriers, and fall prevention equipment be installed, along with appropriate signs, to ensure the highest standard of safety?
- **For all significant operations, such as work on the roof or painting the exterior of the Kingdom Hall, the Regional Building Committee should be contacted before any work takes place.**

### Slip/Trip Hazards

The most common injuries sustained on Kingdom Hall property are due to slips and trips. The resulting falls can be serious and so it is important to address these hazards, especially in areas accessible to the public. Please look out for the following:

- Are there floors, e.g. in the toilets, that are, or can become, slippery when wet? If so, can the floor surface be changed for one less slippery when wet?
- If spillage or contamination occurs is it dealt with quickly?
- Are external paths, stairs, ramps and car parks, free from slippery debris or deposits and well lit? Are there good handrails where necessary?
- How are slip and trip hazards such as trailing cables dealt with?
- If removing slip/trip hazards involves alterations to the fabric of the building, the Regional Building Committee should be contacted.

Also, thoughtful consideration for older ones is vital. We should be quick to offer a supporting hand as they move about.

Note: Cordless microphones, whilst removing the trip hazard of trailing cables, should not be used during confidential meetings.

### Electrical Safety

A competent person should carry out all electrical work.

Kingdom Hall electrical systems should be inspected and tested by a qualified, competent person at a maximum interval of every five years. Prior to starting the inspection, the electrician who carries it out should be given a copy of the Kingdom Hall's asbestos survey report (unless the hall was built after January 2004). The certificate of compliance should be kept in the Kingdom Hall Maintenance File.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) should also be carried out at a maximum interval of every five years.

### Gas Safety

Only engineers registered under the Gas Safe Register can work on gas appliances or supply. Have them checked annually as specified in the *Fire Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Worksheet* (T-34).

## Equipment

Only suitable equipment should be used at the Kingdom Hall. Any ladders, gardening equipment, hand tools or other equipment should regularly be checked, maintained and inspected by someone competent to do so. Anyone using such equipment should be properly trained, supervised by those with appropriate experience, follow manufacturer's instructions and work safely.

## Hazardous Substances

It is not recommended that substances with a hazard-warning symbol be stored or used in the Kingdom Hall. However, if for some reason this is necessary, bear in mind the following points:

- Exposure to hazardous substances can result from inhalation, contact with the skin, splashing into the eyes, or swallowing.
- Ensure that hazardous substances are used and stored strictly in accordance with the instructions printed on the container and available from the manufacturer in the form of a safety data sheet.
- The leaflet *COSHH: A Brief Guide to the Regulations INDG136 [revised2]* is available in small quantities from HSE books if further information is required.

## Asbestos

Unless your Kingdom Hall was built after January 2004 it is the responsibility of the body/bodies of elders to ensure that what is known as a type II survey of the Kingdom Hall has been carried out in order to identify any materials that might contain asbestos. This should have been done by now. If it has not, please follow the procedure under "Maintenance" to select a qualified asbestos surveyor. Organizations offering an asbestos survey should be able to comply with UKAS accreditation EN45004. Alternatively, individuals carrying out surveys should possess the minimum qualification of either P402 Proficiency from the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) or Level 3 Certificate in Asbestos Inspection Procedures from The Royal Society for the Protection of Health (RSPH), and be able to demonstrate experience in surveying buildings for asbestos. Their professional indemnity cover should be in the region of £2 million.

Samples taken by the surveyor should be analysed by a laboratory with UKAS accreditation ISO 17025.

No work at all which may create or disturb dust or fibres can be carried out until at least a type II survey has been completed and it is sure that the work will not expose volunteers to asbestos containing materials. Regional Building Committees will not carry out, or approve, work on any Kingdom Halls built before January 2004 until they have studied at least a type II report. Kingdom Halls that are scheduled for refurbishment or demolition likely need a type III survey of the work area. (A type III survey builds on the type II survey but examines all potentially asbestos containing materials in the work area, not just those accessible in the type II survey.)

The survey report should be retained in the Kingdom Hall operating file. Any asbestos removal work recommended should be carried out by a licensed contractor chosen according to the above-mentioned procedure. Your local Health and Safety Executive office may be able to assist with a list of contractors.

Any asbestos-containing materials not recommended for removal in the Asbestos Management Plan prepared as a result of the survey must remain in a safe condition. You will check this as an item on the annual inspection for the *Fire Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Worksheet* (T-34). If the asbestos or its coating seems to be damaged or to have deteriorated so that it might release fibres, seek expert advice from a surveyor or



contractor as above. The materials must either be brought into a safe condition, or be safely removed.

Having asbestos work carried out by a qualified professional will cost, but by selecting the company prudently, you can be sure that the expense is necessary and proportionate to the risk.—Proverbs 22:3.

Your Regional Building Committee has summary sheets prepared by the branch office dealing with the following matters: The Law Regarding Asbestos, Commissioning an Asbestos Survey, The Asbestos Management Plan, and Regulations Relating to Repair and Removal. Please request these from the Regional Building Committee as necessary.

### **Legionella**

Water stored in unclean tanks at temperatures between 20 and 45°C can support the growth of legionella bacteria. This may include cold-water tanks in warm roof spaces during summer, or warm water tanks that never get hot enough to destroy the bacterium (e.g. where the heating is only switched on intermittently for meetings). This problem is not applicable in many halls as the taps are fed directly from the water main, with hot water being provided via a combination boiler. If, however, you have concerns about the arrangements in the Kingdom Hall, obtain a report from a qualified plumber through your Regional Building Committee.

### **Vehicles**

There is a risk that pedestrians, especially children or the elderly, may be injured by vehicle movements at the Kingdom Hall site. There should be good pedestrian and vehicle separation, and parents must control their children properly at all times, especially in the car park area. The risk to children from the public highway should also be considered and parents must be advised to take proper precautions. The elders should be concerned about the speed at which vehicles move within the Kingdom Hall car park, and efforts must be made to ensure that this is not excessive.

### **Monitoring of Contractors**

If a commercial contractor is used to maintain any heating systems, electrical systems, pressure vessels, or personnel lifts, then a mature brother should accompany the contractor throughout his visit. The brother should be capable of pointing out any unusual hazards in connection with the building. He should also be able to handle the contractor authoritatively so that he does not, for example, misuse the Kingdom Hall telephone or take items that do not belong to him. Any contractors chosen for such work should be fully qualified, competent, and able to work safely. The contractor should provide an up-to-date certificate of liability insurance before any work commences. As the congregation is not an employer, the *Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act, 1974*, does not apply to it. However, the contractor should fully comply with the *Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act, 1974*, when working at the hall as he will be either an employee of a company or self-employed.

### **Lone Working**

For safety reasons, generally this is to be avoided.

## Security

Giving proper attention to the security of the Kingdom Hall will protect its dignity as a place of worship. It will also show proper regard for the resources that the local brothers and sisters have given to bring praise to God. (Proverbs 2:11) The level of security required will depend on the location of the hall. The following provisions would be considered reasonable:

Feature	Minimum Recommended Specification	Additional Measures Where Required
Fencing, Boundaries and Gates	Walls, boundaries and gates should be well maintained and safe. There should be no risk to passers-by or neighbours from protrusions or collapse. Prevent unauthorized access to the grounds, including as a play area.	Add equipment to prevent climbing over walls or fences, in conjunction with appropriate warning signs as advised by the local Police Crime Prevention Officer.
Grounds	Should be tidy. Ensure that there are no materials, ladders, etc., left in the open that could assist someone attempting unauthorized entry, arson, or be a hazard to a visitor. Maximize visibility, especially of doors and windows, to passers-by.	Carefully research whether CCTV would be of benefit. If so, install a theft/vandal resistant system.
Lighting	Should be vandal resistant and provide sufficient illumination to light parking facilities and walkways.	Install movement sensors and vandal resistant floodlighting.
Windows	If windows are appropriate, it is essential that these be securely fastened and sturdy. Ensure that entry cannot be gained by simply breaking any window. Connect opening windows to the alarm system.	Security glazing, boarding, plating, bricking up, installation of shutters or vandal-proof grilles.
Doors	Doors, frames, locks, hinges and bolts should be sturdy and provide adequate security e.g. to crowbars and impact. (All door closers should be properly adjusted so as not to pose a hazard.) There should be no thin wood or glass panes in or beside doors that could allow access to locks. Emergency exit doors should have appropriate panic exit devices. Letter boxes if provided, should be secure sealed metal boxes or external receptacles.	Protect with steel plates, roller shutters, improved security lighting and improved visibility. Upgrade panic exit devices to a multi-point latching system. They may need connecting to the alarm with an impact sensor. These points especially apply to doors on secluded elevations.
Keyholders Locking-Up	Maintain a list of all who have a set of Kingdom Hall keys. List the procedure for locking-up the Kingdom Hall and any specific areas to check.	
Alarm	In most cases, an alarm that cannot easily be disabled should be installed to cover all windows and doors. An autodialler that alerts selected brothers via telephone when the alarm is triggered is a practical feature.	Install roof space alarm sensors to detect intruders entering the building by removing roof tiles.
Hall Interior	When the hall is unoccupied: No equipment of potential value to burglars should be left in the open; sound equipment should be kept out of sight; contribution boxes should be left open.	
Attendants	When the hall is in use, the attendants should undertake security duties in keeping with the risks that have been identified.	

If there are specific security concerns or a history of attempted burglaries, vandalism or threats to those attending the hall, the local Police Crime Prevention Officer, as well as the Regional Building Committee, may be able to provide helpful suggestions regarding additional security measures.

### Opening and Locking Up

On opening the hall confirm that any security locks fitted to fire exit doors have been released.

When locking up, in order to ensure the security of the Kingdom Hall, the last person to leave the building should check that the building is unoccupied, engage any other security measures, such as an alarm and switch off the lights before locking all external doors. If that person is unable to secure the building, he should call someone who can and wait until that one arrives before leaving.

Please affix the accompanying *Security and Safety Reminders* card (or a suitable adapted version to reflect local circumstances) in a visible place on the final exit route of the Kingdom Hall.

## Kingdom Hall Assistance Arrangement

The Kingdom Hall Assistance Arrangement (KHAA) is a means by which congregations can pool their resources to protect against losses for which they would otherwise have to buy insurance. Contributions designated for the KHAA can be used to pay for property damage to Kingdom Halls and liability claims against congregations and their authorized representatives during the course and within the scope of their assigned duties. The KHAA may also help defray expenses incurred by those injured in accidents at Kingdom Halls. The KHAA does not pay for wear-and-tear, deterioration of property, or other maintenance needs.

***This is not a commercial insurance programme.*** The branch office administers the KHAA fund, which is held by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Britain and into which KHAA contributions from congregations are deposited. This fund is used to make virtually all applicable payments. The fund is also used to purchase commercial “excess” insurance to protect the branch corporations and the congregations from large claims or catastrophic property losses. We believe this arrangement is in line with Charity Commission guidance in publication *CC49 Charities and Insurance* (Version Feb. 2007).

Congregations have a legal right and duty, as registered charities, to decide what insurance is appropriate for their activities, and the body of elders, as trustees, bears the responsibility for this. However, the Kingdom Hall Assistance Arrangement has been put in place by the Governing Body and the branch office to care for all such needs. It would not be prudent for congregations to buy insurance that duplicates the provisions of the Kingdom Hall Assistance Arrangement. Thus, *the branch does not recommend the purchase of any commercial insurance policy for congregations.*

There is an exception to this guidance for congregations that are obliged to carry commercial property insurance as a stipulation of their Kingdom Hall lease, and congregations where the Kingdom Hall is part of a larger building or attached to other buildings. In such circumstances the Risk Assessment Desk at the branch office provides advice and assistance on request. Another exception is the provision of insurance for hired plant and equipment and this should also be discussed with the Risk Assessment Desk.

### Scope

The following are **not** within the scope of the arrangement:

- The personal property of those at the Kingdom Hall. Thus for example, cars parked in the Kingdom Hall car park are there entirely at the owners’ risk, as are coats placed in the Kingdom Hall cloakroom.

- Personal arrangements brothers and sisters make to travel to and from the meetings and an individual's involvement in the public ministry.
- Kingdom Halls that share premises with other third parties. In such cases it is generally advisable to obtain commercial insurance.

**Contributions:** Congregations will receive, at the start of each year, a letter suggesting a contribution amount based upon the needs of all those supported by the KHAA.

**Construction:** Plant may be covered by the KHAA upon request to the Risk Management Desk. Please contact them well in advance to avoid project delays. It is not possible for the KHAA to provide *certificates* of cover for plant, so if the hirer demands one, you may have to purchase insurance from him.

**Certificates of public liability insurance:** These are provided by the KHAA for when congregations rent facilities for congregation meetings, such as for the Memorial. Requests should be made well in advance to ensure that your needs are cared for in time.

**Newly purchased properties and land:** Please complete a *Property Description Form* (T-49b) to list the property with the KHAA. All properties held in preparation for Kingdom Hall construction should be kept free of hazards and secured against trespassers.

**Flats:** Some properties used by travelling overseers or special pioneers, can be included, by request, in the KHAA. Personal property of the occupants is not protected by the KHAA.

The same standards for inspections, security and safety that apply to Kingdom Halls would also apply to such accommodation.

**Unpaid volunteers:** Unpaid volunteers assisting with Kingdom Hall construction, even if they have out-of-pocket expenses reimbursed, are within the scope of the KHAA. However, anyone paid even a nominal amount for work at the Kingdom Hall would not be protected and should arrange his or her own insurance. See the "Maintenance" section of this *Manual* for information on hiring contractors.

## Keeping Costs Down

The success of the KHAA relies upon the vigilance and care of all the members of the congregation with respect to maintenance and security as set out in this *Manual*. The body/bodies of elders should ensure that the *Fire Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Worksheet* (T-34) appended is completed annually and then quickly complete any necessary work. All should also be aware that defects may arise at any time and should be dealt with quickly before losses result.

## How to Respond to Accidents Resulting in Bodily Injury

1. **Please ensure that the injured party receives appropriate medical attention as soon as possible.** In most cases of serious injury, it is best for an ambulance to transport the injured to a medical facility.
2. **Appoint an experienced elder to handle accident-related follow-through.** The elder should review the information here and follow the instructions found on the *Accident Notice* (T-5). He should keep in close touch with the injured person to see if any help may be needed. Please keep the Risk Management Desk informed of any significant changes in the person's situation.
3. An *Accident Notice* (T-5) should be completed within one week for all accidents that require significant first aid. Please stick closely to the questions provided in the form. **Please do not offer comment on who may have been at fault or what caused the accident.** Do not refer to any legal action.
4. If the injury is serious enough to require **professional medical treatment**, please call the Risk Management Desk on 020 8906 2211 **within 24 hours**. This should be done even

if the individual has personal insurance and does not plan to submit any bills to the congregation or circuit. If complications arise later and matters were not promptly reported, our ability to render assistance may be jeopardized.

5. If you receive any correspondence related to the accident, if financial help is needed, or if there are questions about medical bills or other costs, please promptly contact the Risk Management Desk for assistance.
6. Telephone the Risk Management Desk **immediately** if there is any mention of legal action or correspondence comes from a lawyer as a result of an accident. If you receive a telephone call from someone claiming to represent the injured person, do not discuss the matter with him or her. Take down his or her contact information and explain that your representative will respond; then immediately call the Risk Management Desk.

### **How to Respond to Incidents Involving Property Damage**

1. Appoint a qualified elder to take the lead in managing the situation.
2. Protect the property from further damage, loss, or break-in.
3. Promptly report break-ins, thefts, and vandalism to the police. Then telephone the Risk Management Desk for further assistance.
4. In case of major damage, please notify the Regional Building Committee. Then telephone the Risk Management Desk for further assistance.
5. For minor losses that can be easily repaired without assistance from the Regional Building Committee, please send bills or written estimates for all repairs along with the completed *Property Loss Report* (T-55) to the Risk Management Desk. If you cannot do this within 30 days, please contact the Risk Management Desk.

## **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* (DDA) requires that individuals with disabilities are not discriminated against when endeavouring to use the facilities of a public building. To comply, “service providers” (i.e. the body/bodies of elders) have to make “reasonable adjustments” to physical features of the Kingdom Hall that hinder disabled ones endeavouring to benefit from the meeting programme.

The Act defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has an effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The following points may assist you in assessing compliance.

- Congregations will fill many of the requirements of the DDA simply by showing the typical courteous and helpful attitude for which Jehovah’s people are well known. A key aspect of the DDA involves communication. Talk to ones in the congregation with disabilities about their needs to ascertain whether there are features of the building that make its use difficult. Take practical action to assist these ones.
- Any features of the building that could prevent disabled congregation members or visitors from using the hall should be identified. Carry out a survey of the hall to identify features of the building that may cause difficulties for disabled ones and keep on file a written list of the findings. Lighting, signage, the sound system (deaf loop system), steps, door handles and door closers are typical of the aspects of a Kingdom Hall that could cause difficulties. Once this survey has been completed, if it is decided that there are modifications that need to be made, the elders should arrange for this to be done promptly. If there is uncertainty as to whether any work is necessary, please contact the Regional Building Committee who will guide you in this regard.

- If it is not reasonably possible to remove, alter or avoid features that inhibit accessibility, for example, perhaps due to a very awkward access route up stairs, it will be necessary to think creatively about alternative ways of assisting disabled ones to benefit from the meetings.
- The resources of an organization are taken into account. As congregations generally have limited resources, the body/bodies of elders and individuals with disabilities would need to be reasonable as far as making practical adjustments to the building is concerned.
- It will often be more cost effective to improve access to a building during a refurbishment project than undertake a separate project specifically to address DDA issues. To illustrate, a congregation may be working towards a new hall or refurbishment. It may be appropriate to make some reasonable adaptations straight away to improve the existing building in line with the DDA. However, it would be counter-productive to spend large sums of money on adaptations that would only be applicable for a short time and erode funds set aside for future construction.

## **“No Smoking” Signage**

Smoking is prohibited inside public buildings in England, Scotland and Wales. Although smoking is abhorrent to Jehovah’s people and totally prohibited in Kingdom Halls, to comply with the law it is necessary to install a sign to confirm that the building is a no-smoking area.

Guidance and template signs can be obtained from [www.smokefreeengland.co.uk](http://www.smokefreeengland.co.uk), [www.clearingtheairscotland.com](http://www.clearingtheairscotland.com) and [www.smokingbanwales.co.uk](http://www.smokingbanwales.co.uk).

## **Construction**

If construction works are required, it is essential that the Regional Building Committee be contacted at the outset. (Even work to outbuildings on the Kingdom Hall is viewed as construction.)

### **Overview**

Indeed, it is gratifying to see how our brothers voluntary contributions have supported Kingdom Hall construction, resulting in the advancement of true worship. (Isaiah 54:2, 3) Yet, since lands with limited resources continue to have a need for more Kingdom Halls, your further assistance is needed in limiting Kingdom Hall construction in Britain to what is really needed. It continues to be a time for moderation in planning for the remodelling of existing Kingdom Halls and the construction of new ones in Britain so that it will be possible to channel more money into meeting critical needs in other countries.

What can elders do to support this arrangement? Endeavour to keep your Kingdom Hall in good repair. By giving needed attention to maintaining your present Kingdom Hall, its lifetime can be lengthened, and this will help avoid a premature need for a replacement. All the elders must cooperate to make the care of the Kingdom Hall a priority. In this way, the building will continue to represent Jehovah properly in the community.

### **Counting the Cost**

Carefully count the cost and carefully weigh the need before rushing to remodel your Kingdom Hall or seeking to build a new one. When renovation or new construction is needed, please limit this to what is necessary—even if you have sufficient funds on hand locally. A fine principle was stated in the February 1992 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 4, paragraph 11: “Even though a congregation may have accumulated funds sufficient to include



extra features [in its own Kingdom Hall] without seeking a loan, consideration should be given to using conventional designs and to building modestly. This makes additional funds available for use in other theocratic endeavours.”—See also *Organized to Do Jehovah’s Will*, page 120; 2 Corinthians 8:14.

Regional Building Committees are being asked to be mindful of economizing when aiding congregations in buying property, performing major renovations, or building new Kingdom Halls. Before deciding to renovate, for example, the question should be raised, Does an urgent need really exist, or is it simply a desire to upgrade or relocate an otherwise suitable facility? Consider whether this is really needed or whether existing Kingdom Halls can be used more efficiently. A single auditorium can often be used by three or four congregations. (See *Our Kingdom Ministry*, December 1990, page 3, paragraph 8.) If it seems wise to build on a new site, the Regional Building Committee can help you evaluate property before any offer to purchase is made.

Kingdom Hall designs, including finishes, should be modest and appropriate to the surroundings and should minimize labour-intensive details—in this way reducing construction time and simplifying maintenance. This was one of the prime objectives in instituting the Kingdom Hall Package. Your cooperation is essential to keep down overall costs and not deviate from standard Kingdom Hall designs. The need for much additional work is removed when congregations utilize the Kingdom Hall Package rather than insisting on their own preferences with regard to constructional detail.

When undertaking construction at your Kingdom Hall, please give attention to enlisting full volunteer support of the local congregation(s). Of course, key personnel that usually work with the Regional Building Committee will supplement this. Health and Safety legislation means it is vital to ensure that all those used on the project have adequate and appropriate training. However, having volunteers from the local congregation(s) assist with the project fosters a sense of responsibility toward any new facility, including its continued upkeep and maintenance. In any case, operating and maintenance expenses inherent in the design selected should not exceed the collective means of the congregation(s) as reflected in the financial survey that is made along with the estimated budget.

### **Regional Building Committee Involvement With Construction and Refurbishment**

Whenever a Kingdom Hall project, whether for new construction or renovation, involves using volunteer help from outside the congregation(s) that will meet in a new hall or in an existing one undergoing renovation, the Regional Building Committee should take oversight. This will include the entire project, from the initial decision to expand, to initiating a building fund through purchasing property, advising on health and safety organization, constructing the hall, and completing the final landscaping.

Even larger maintenance projects (such as painting or repair work) could have unforeseen legal and financial implications. Therefore, bodies of elders should discuss proposed work on the Kingdom Hall with the Regional Building Committee at an early stage and be amenable to their guidance and help. The body/bodies of elders, not the operating committee, are responsible to contact the Regional Building Committee for the purpose of organizing construction projects.

When problems have arisen in connection with Kingdom Hall projects, the root cause has been a lack of communication or an unrealistic view as to how long it would take for the project to come to fruition. Thus, take steps to ensure that good communication exists within the body/bodies of elders and with the Regional Building Committee.

When two or more congregations decide to cooperate in buying land and building a hall or in remodelling an existing building, there should be thorough discussion by all the elders, along with the Regional Building Committee, of what is proposed and the agreement reached. The respective congregations should clearly know, through their bodies of elders, what is recommended and the estimated cost so that a final decision can be made

by each congregation on the basis of sound information. The general agreement to co-operate on the project and the basic understanding should be set down in writing and signed by all the elders after approval by the respective congregations. We cannot emphasize too strongly the need for cooperation among the bodies of elders and the congregations involved. Your making good use of the voluntary efforts available through those working with the Regional Building Committee follows the example of the tabernacle construction in the wilderness and the building of Solomon's temple, when fine craftsmen from among Jehovah's people were used.—Exodus 35:34, 35; 2 Chronicles 2:11-16.

Emergency situations will be handled promptly by the Regional Building Committee. Congregations, however, can show their regard for the time and resources of the volunteers and of dedicated funds by not neglecting maintenance or security to the extent that an emergency is created.

It is best that unpaid volunteers perform the construction, renovation or repair work where possible. However, in view of the high cost of travel, it is appropriate for Regional Building Committee members and some key personnel to have their out-of-pocket expenses covered in connection with assistance given to congregations.

### **Purchase/Sale of Property**

Whenever a congregation is seriously contemplating buying, selling or leasing any kind of property, it is imperative that the body/bodies of elders contact the branch office promptly. There are legal duties that must be performed before negotiations begin. Please also note the Charity Commission guidance, *CC33 – Acquiring Land*, and *CC28 – Disposing of Charity Land*.

Under the *Places of Worship (Enfranchisement) Act 1920*, the trustees of a place of worship held on a long lease (not less than 21 years) have powers of compulsory acquisition of the freehold of the property. This means that the congregation has the legal right to buy the Kingdom Hall. The Act does not apply where the freehold is owned by certain public authorities, including local authorities.

### **Project Organization**

When a new Kingdom Hall is to be built or a major renovation project is being planned, it is advisable for the elders to initially select a Local Building Committee. It is good to select brothers for this committee who have some building or business experience, if possible. There should be **equal** representation of all congregations that will meet in the Kingdom Hall. The building committee should cooperate well with the body, or bodies, of elders, consulting them, since the building committee is responsible to them. The elders will be consulted on any major changes or unusual developments. If the elders, Regional Building Committee, circuit overseer, and circuit planning representative conclude that the project is feasible, then a **Project Committee** should be formed. The local building committee will cease to exist when the project committee is formed. When planning for expansion it is essential that **good cooperation and communication** is maintained between all those involved.

The project committee will comprise of two Regional Building Committee representatives, and two elders from the congregation involved (or one elder per congregation if the hall is shared). The chairman will be one of the Regional Building Committee's representatives.

The project committee will have involvement in the safe organization of the project, VAT registration (if applicable), and some of the routine matters concerning the proposed works. Significant or unusual matters will be discussed and agreed between the Regional Building Committee and the entire body(ies) of elders.

### **Financing the Project**

Financing the purchase, construction, refurbishment or purchase of freehold for a Kingdom Hall is the responsibility of the entire congregation(s).

Loans with interest-free repayments are available from the branch office to meet valid needs. The Regional Building Committee coordinates loan applications.

Congregations are encouraged to repay loans within 10 years. However, if circumstances warrant a departure from this guideline, the branch office will consider each request on a case-by-case basis.

When the congregation is discussing the possibility of obtaining a Kingdom Hall or renovating one, the elders may seek needed information concerning finances available from those associated with the congregation. The information required will include the following points:

- The total amount already raised towards the project.
- Additional funds to be contributed before the project starts.
- Any individual loans to be received from members of the congregation(s). Bear in mind that on occasion, “unforeseen occurrence” has resulted in this type of loan having to be recalled at short notice. Thus, unless the amount is relatively low, appropriate caution should be exercised if loans of this type are accepted.
- The total amount that will be contributed each month to cover congregation expenses and loan repayments.

To determine these amounts, slips of paper can be distributed in order to give all the privilege and opportunity to anonymously indicate the amounts they could contribute or make available for some or all of the categories indicated above. All in the congregation(s) should be encouraged to begin immediately contributing the amount they have indicated they could donate monthly. Subsequently, if potential donations are not sufficient, determine how much you will need to borrow and the maximum monthly loan payment that the congregation(s) can reasonably bear. The larger your loan payment the sooner your loan will be paid off and the sooner other congregations will be able to receive funds for their Kingdom Hall projects. When determining the amount that realistically can be paid monthly for the loan repayment, be aware that at times the amounts listed on the survey slips are higher than what will actually be contributed.

### **Congregation Approval for a Proposed Project**

When the elders, along with the Regional Building Committee, have a recommendation to make to the congregation(s) regarding a proposed Kingdom Hall construction project, they should share full details with the publishers. At the outset, the congregations should know basically what the total cost of building at a certain location would be. If property is to be purchased for a new Kingdom Hall, the added cost of developing the site and of constructing the hall, including the statutory approvals, should be outlined. The publishers should have opportunity to consider the full details and to have all their questions answered before voting on a resolution to build.—Please review the Question Box from the July 1984 *Our Kingdom Ministry* as to how resolutions are to be prepared and presented.

### **Property Description Form**

The body/bodies of elders should ensure that where the value or design of the Kingdom Hall significantly changes, a new *Property Description Form* (T-49b) is completed. The original should be sent to the branch office, and a copy kept in the Kingdom Hall operating file.

### **Street Numbering**

When a new hall is built on a new site (or the site layout is changed) it may be necessary to apply for a street number (or building name). This will also ensure that a postcode is assigned to the hall. Contact the Local Authority street naming and numbering department for instructions on the procedure to follow.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Should the structure of the hall be modified for the benefit of a multi-language group/congregation?*

It is not recommended that expensive or costly adaptations be made for multi-language groups or congregations because they often outgrow such modifications.

*Should we sell our existing hall so as to have funds available to purchase a new hall?*

No. It cannot be guaranteed that another site will be obtained quickly and it can be difficult to save funds towards a new hall while renting another building. If you have any queries on this subject, it is essential to discuss the matter with the Regional Building Committee. If required, the Regional Building Committee will write to the branch office on your behalf for further advice.

The branch office does not offer bridging loans to enable congregations to purchase a new site before selling their old one. It is recommended that congregations do not obtain commercial loans.

*Is it appropriate to establish a joint fund to contribute towards a project?*

If a specific project is contemplated, then congregations that would benefit from the hall may contribute to a joint fund until the project is paid for whereupon the fund should be discontinued.

*Can funds be donated to another congregation in support of their project?*

There is no objection to this when there is a tangible link between congregations. The congregation constitution allows for this to be done by resolution. However, bear in mind that it is inappropriate for congregations to solicit funds from other congregations.

## Construction Volunteers

The May 2006 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, highlighted that willing volunteers who are baptized and have a cooperative spirit are needed to support the work of the Regional Building Committees. It mentioned: "Even if you do not have construction skills, you can still contribute much to the success of a building project. You may also receive training that will allow you to be used more extensively in the future."

Additionally, note what is stated on pages 116-17 of *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will* regarding this activity: "The construction of Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls is a form of sacred service, similar to the work of constructing Solomon's temple. (1 Ki. 8:13-18) Many brothers and sisters show outstanding zeal for Jehovah's organization by volunteering their time and assets to support and have a part in this work. Are you in a position to assist in this aspect of sacred service? If you are a baptized publisher and are willing to share in such activity, the Regional Building Committee would very much appreciate your offering to assist."

Those who desire to offer volunteer assistance to Kingdom Hall construction should obtain a *Kingdom Hall Volunteer Questionnaire* (S-82) from the congregation secretary.

On completion of the *Questionnaire*, the volunteer should return it to the Congregation Service Committee. They will need to give serious consideration to each question on the reverse side of the form, since these will also be used in the future when volunteers are needed for specialized work such as disaster relief. **A copy of all approved newly completed forms should be retained in the congregation's file, and the original should promptly be sent to the chairman of the Regional Building Committee for your area.** If the service committee determines that an individual does not qualify, two of them should meet with him and advise him of this while lovingly encouraging him to do what is necessary to qualify in the near future.

If there is any change in the circumstances of a volunteer, a new *Questionnaire* should be submitted **immediately**, especially when a brother is appointed as an elder or ministerial servant or there is a change of address.

The Regional Building Committee should promptly be notified if a volunteer moves away.

If an approved volunteer becomes disqualified, i.e. is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses or is judicially reprov'd, the body of elders is responsible to notify the Regional Building Committee **promptly**, so that the worker is no longer used for Kingdom Hall construction. If, for some other reason, the body of elders feels that a volunteer no longer qualifies, the local elders should discuss their concerns with the individual. If their view remains unchanged, they should notify the Regional Building Committee. However, please note that confidential details as to the reason for the disqualification should not be shared with the Regional Building Committee. If the individual later qualifies, he may submit a new *Kingdom Hall Volunteer Questionnaire* as outlined above.

The body of elders can request additional copies of the *Kingdom Hall Volunteer Questionnaire* (S-82) from the Regional Building Committee or via the monthly congregation literature request.

## Original Forms Index

Please do not use these copies. Photocopy them and keep the original here.

Title	Reference/Issue Date
<i>Accident Notice</i>	T-5-E Bi 08/09
<i>Fire Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Worksheet</i>	T-34-E Bi 08/09
<i>Property Description Form</i>	T-49b-E Bi 01/05
<i>Property Loss Report</i>	T-55-E Bi 08/09
<i>Required Actions Sheet</i>	





## ACCIDENT NOTICE

### 1. INJURED PERSON

Name: ..... Age: .....  
Address: .....  
Occupation: ..... Tel. No. Home: .....  
Employed by: ..... Work: .....  
Cong. name: ..... Cong. No.: .....

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### 2. ABOUT THE ACCIDENT

- a. Location: ☐ Kingdom Hall ☐ Assembly Hall ☐ Other (Please define) .....
- b. Location Address: .....
- c. Date of accident: ..... Time: .....
- d. Describe the injury and how it occurred: .....  
.....  
.....
- e. How was the injury treated? .....
- f. Who treated the injury? Give name, role (e.g. RBC first-aider; doctor) and provide contact details: .....  
.....
- g. Where was the injury treated? ☐ On site ☐ Doctors' Surgery  
☐ Hospital (☐ Outpatient ☐ Inpatient)
- h. Expected recovery time: .....
- i. Did any third party (e.g. HSE, Local Authority, Police) take enforcement action or investigate?  
☐ No ☐ Yes (If yes, provide full details. Use separate sheets if necessary. Provide copies of any relevant information.) .....
- j. Describe any warning or counsel given concerning safety measures, including signs, before the accident occurred. ....
- k. Describe any actions taken to prevent similar injuries in future. ....
- If it would be helpful please attach a diagram and/or photographs. Give the date and time of the photographs and explain any differences between what they show and the conditions at the time of the accident.**

### 3. WITNESSES

Name: ..... Tel. No. Home: .....  
Address: ..... Work: .....  
  
Name: ..... Tel. No. Home: .....  
Address: ..... Work: .....

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### 4. PERSONS TO CONTACT

Elder's name: .....	Elder's name: .....
Address: .....	Address: .....
.....	
Tel. No. Home: .....	Tel. No. Home: .....
Work: .....	Work: .....

---

.....  
Signature of coordinator of the body of elders/RBC member/circuit overseer/construction overseer  
(as appropriate)

.....  
Date

(1) Promptly send original to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Treasurer's Office, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN, and (2) retain a copy for your file.



# FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY INSPECTION WORKSHEET

Title-Holding Cong. Name ..... Cong. No. ....

Each September a competent brother, familiar with the contents of the *Kingdom Hall Manual*, should be assigned to inspect the Kingdom Hall. This forms the basis of the annual fire and safety risk assessment. When two or more congregations share the hall, the operating committee should select the brother. Consider all inspection points listed below and tick box if hall complies. If an item is defective, do not tick the corresponding box on this form and list it in the accompanying *Required Actions Sheet*. Following the inspection, promptly forward both documents to the body(ies) of elders who will ensure the Required Actions are attended to.

## FIRE SAFETY

- ☐ The commercial fire extinguisher inspection has been carried out within the past year.
- ☐ Portable fire fighting equipment conspicuously sited and indicated by a red pictogram sign.
- ☐ An evacuation policy is in place which includes all with impairments.
- ☐ Fire Action Notice is clearly displayed on the noticeboard.
- ☐ Annual fire drill was carried out by each congregation. Max evacuation time taken: . . . . . Max numbers evacuated: . . . . .
- ☐ Any smoke alarms have been tested and are fully functional.
- ☐ Fire alarm is operational, and audible in all parts of building.
- ☐ Any fire break glass contacts conspicuously located and identified with red pictogram signs.
- ☐ Weekly tests of fire alarm by a competent person are being carried out and recorded.
- ☐ Exit routes are marked with appropriate pictogram (green man running) signs showing direction of escape.
- ☐ All fire resisting self closing doors on escape routes closing fully, in good repair, and not left wedged open.
- ☐ Checks on exit doors by competent person are being carried out at each meeting.
- ☐ Combustible materials and flammable gas canisters/paints/liquids, etc. are kept to a minimum, stored in appropriate containers, and not located near electrical/ventilation equipment or in the loft. No gas canisters stored.
- ☐ All heating appliances guarded, securely fixed in position, and at a safe distance from combustible materials.
- ☐ All storage areas are tidy and free of debris and clutter.
- ☐ Fire interlock (which will shut down heating and ventilation system if smoke is detected) is operational.
- ☐ Completed discharge test lasting 1 hour of the emergency lighting system. (Turn off the lighting circuit and see if the emergency lights last an hour. Ensure batteries have time to recharge before the next meeting.)
- ☐ Monthly “flick tests” of emergency lighting are being carried out and recorded.

## ELECTRICAL, AND GAS SAFETY

- ☐ Heating/cooking equipment has been serviced by competent professional. (On the Gas Safe Register.)
- ☐ A qualified electrician has inspected the electrical system and fire/security alarm system within the last five years. Date: . . . . .
- ☐ All electrical appliances, components (switches, sockets, etc.) and extension leads are in good condition.

## SLIP/TRIP AND FALL PREVENTION

- ☐ External pedestrian areas/car parks are in good condition, free of holes, trip hazards and are adequately lit.
- ☐ Changes of level (curbs, steps, etc.) are highlighted with contrasting colours.
- ☐ Stairs and ramps have anti-slip surfaces; handrails provided are secure and sturdy.
- ☐ Entry mats are in good condition without curled-up edges, and are fixed in position so as not move around.
- ☐ Floors are even, and flooring materials do not present trip hazards.
- ☐ Mops and “wet floor” signs for spills, tracked-in water and cleaning are available.
- ☐ Glass in doors, within 300mm of doors, or within 800mm of the floor, is safety glass.
- ☐ Falls from the roof space are prevented, if access is permitted.—*Manual: Work at Height*.
- ☐ Equipment provided for work at height is in good condition and suitable.—*Manual: Work at Height*.

## ASBESTOS

There are two options according to the age of the building:

- ☐ The building was completed in 2004 and later, and the Congregation Trustees have made a written assessment which concludes that no asbestos containing materials were used in its construction.
- ☐ The building was built before 2004 so a type two survey has been carried out on (Date) . . . . . and is kept on file. Any asbestos containing materials found in the survey and not requiring removal remain undamaged and in a good condition and no work likely to disturb them is going to take place in the forthcoming year. (If work planned might disturb asbestos obtain a type three survey of the affected area. If any asbestos containing materials appear damaged take expert advice on what to do.)

## GENERAL LOSS PREVENTION

- ☐ Entire site is appropriately fenced and free of undue hazards, even to uninvited visitors after dark.
- ☐ Trees on or near the property are well maintained, not a threat to the Kingdom Hall or neighbouring buildings.
- ☐ The roof is sound and watertight; gutters and drainpipes are in good repair and free from obstructions or leaks.
- ☐ External structure sound, including painted surfaces, windows, masonry, etc.
- ☐ Hall/site security is consistent with the local threat of vandalism, arson or theft.—*Manual: Security.*
- ☐ Confirm that list of keyholders is up to date and the locking-up procedure is being followed.—*Manual: Security.*
- ☐ Ensure any intruder alarm system is operational and has been serviced by a competent professional.
- ☐ Heating, ventilation/air conditioning equipment has been serviced by a competent engineer within the last year.
- ☐ If there is a kitchen, the extract system is free of dust and grease to prevent fire.
- ☐ The plumbing system and water tanks are sound, leak free and suitably protected from frost.
- ☐ There is no evidence of damp problems, condensation, or dry rot, especially under the floors or in toilet areas.
- ☐ Wood is free of rot and insect infestation.
- ☐ Cleaning products and other hazardous chemicals are safely stored out of reach of young children.
- ☐ Sound equipment is, where possible, kept out of sight when the hall is not in use.
- ☐ Overall, the Kingdom Hall site, including grounds, buildings and building contents, is safe and well maintained.

## Fire Risk Assessment—Record of Significant Findings

The “competent person” should complete, or assist with completion of this part of the form.

The building is used exclusively as a place of worship. There is no smoking allowed anywhere on the premises. The standard of maintenance is high. The occupants are in a high state of alertness when using the building. They all know each other well with regards to the need for assistance in an evacuation.

Normal Occupancy No: Floor Area: m2

### Step 1 - Identify fire hazards

Sources of Ignition	Sources of Fuel	Sources of Oxygen
(e.g. boiler, electrical appliances)	(e.g. gas supply, any combustible fittings and furnishings)	(probably none)

### Step 2 - People at Risk

(Probably those using the hall, unless fire here could endanger others.)

### Step 3 - Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

Evaluate the risk of the fire occurring (probably very low)	Evaluate the risk to people from a fire starting on the premises (with good evacuation, probably very low)
Remove and reduce hazards that may cause a fire. (After caring for the matters in the checklists and the <i>Kingdom Hall Manual</i> , can the elders see anything else that can be done?)	
Remove and reduce the risks to people from a fire. (After caring for the matters in the checklists and the <i>Kingdom Hall Manual</i> , can the elders see anything else that can be done?)	

Date of inspection ..... Signature of the brother who performed the inspection .....

Date by which any problems have been remedied and all items have been checked off .....

Signature of coordinator of the body of elders or operating committee chairman .....

- ☐ Copies supplied to operating committee, Regional Building Committee, and bodies of elders of congregations sharing the Kingdom Hall.

## PROPERTY DESCRIPTION FORM

Fill in one copy of this form for each separate building you are listing with the Kingdom Hall Assistance Arrangement.  
Send to: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Britain, Treasurer's Office, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN

CONGREGATION NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

CONGREGATION NAME: \* \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS OF BUILDING: \_\_\_\_\_  
(No. & Street)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Town) (Postcode)

USE OF BUILDING: ☐ Kingdom Hall ☐ Residence ☐ Shed ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Do you occupy entire building? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If no, please describe buildings) \_\_\_\_\_

The property is: ☐ Freehold ☐ Leasehold ☐ Rented

If the property is either Leasehold or Rented are you required to name landlord/mortgagee on your insurance certificate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**BUILDING:** YEAR BUILT: \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF BUILDING: (Tick only one)

☐ Standard Kingdom Hall Design ☐ Timber Frame  
☐ Brick and Block ☐ Other

Does the building have adequate security? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(Review the "Security" section of the *Kingdom Hall Manual* before answering this question. **If answer is no, state remedial action to be taken.**)

Is the building safe to use and operate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(Review the *Safety Inspection Work Sheet* (T-34) in forms section of the *Kingdom Hall Manual* before answering this question. **If answer is no, state remedial action to be taken.**)

ALARM: (Tick which applies)

☐ Fire alarm ☐ Security alarm ☐ Security alarm connected to auto dialler

BUILDING REPLACEMENT COST (Materials only, do not include labour.) £ \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTENTS VALUE:** (Enter total replacement value of sound equipment, chairs, etc. [new for old])

Do not include value of literature) £ \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURES OF OPERATING COMMITTEE

Date form completed: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Congregation in whose territory the hall is located.





## PROPERTY LOSS REPORT

Attach written estimates/bills and, if applicable, copy of police report.  
Send to: Watch Tower Society Risk Management  
IBSA House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN

CONGREGATION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

CONGREGATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS WHERE LOSS OCCURRED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF LOSS (Give *at least* month and year.) \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF LOSS (Circle one.)

Burglary      Fire      Glass Breakage      Vandalism      Vehicle      Windstorm/Hail      Water Damage

Other (Give description.) \_\_\_\_\_

IF "FIRE" OR "WATER DAMAGE," GIVE CAUSE \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY DAMAGED

(List each item, *giving the cost to repair*. You MUST attach written estimates or bills for each.)

PROPERTY STOLEN, DESTROYED, OR DAMAGED BEYOND REPAIR

(List each item, *giving the cost to replace*. You MUST attach written estimates or bills for each.)

Has RBC been contacted to provide skilled volunteer workers? YES ☐ NO ☐

TOTAL AMOUNT OF CLAIM £ \_\_\_\_\_ (MUST equal total of attached estimates and bills.)

***IF BURGLARY, VANDALISM, OR VEHICLE DAMAGE — YOU MUST REPORT TO POLICE.***

(Attach copy of official police report. If report is unavailable, attach explanation.)

Is identity of one responsible for damage known to you or police? YES ☐ NO ☐ IF YES:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

No. & Street \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_

NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE OF TWO PERSONS WHO MAY BE CONTACTED DURING BUSINESS HOURS:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation Bank Account No. \_\_\_\_\_ Sort Code \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of coordinator of the body of elders \_\_\_\_\_



## REQUIRED ACTIONS SHEET

Further to the inspection, any defects at the Kingdom Hall that require attention should be listed below.

The body(ies) of elders should ensure that the defects listed are attended to promptly.

When each defect is resolved, the elder responsible should initial and date it in the appropriate boxes.

	Location	Defect	Resolved	Initial	Date
1.			<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.			<input type="checkbox"/>		
3.			<input type="checkbox"/>		
4.			<input type="checkbox"/>		
5.			<input type="checkbox"/>		
6.			<input type="checkbox"/>		
7.			<input type="checkbox"/>		
8.			<input type="checkbox"/>		
9.			<input type="checkbox"/>		
10.			<input type="checkbox"/>		

Some matters may require the assistance of the RBC, in which case send them a copy of this sheet with a letter. Once the required actions have been taken advise the body of elders of each congregation that uses the hall, and send a copy to the RBC.

**DO NOT SEND THIS SHEET TO THE BRANCH OFFICE**

