

Risk Assessment Template for Outdoor Worship

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
2 nd December 2020	1	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

This template has been created based on guidance from the [Health and Safety Executive](#) and is intended for use from 3rd December onwards for worship and church-led gatherings taking place outside. A separate risk assessment template is available for all indoor activities.

From 3rd December, regardless of tier, churches are permitted to open for all purposes that can be carried out in a Covid-safe way. Outdoor worship is permitted and outdoor settings are the only places where congregational/group singing can take place. The government [guidance on singing](#) lays out the rules around this and should be read in conjunction with the [performing arts guidance](#). There may be specific local regulations, especially in tier 3 areas, that place additional restrictions on certain activities, whether indoors or outdoors. There are varying limits on mixing of households that apply in different tiers. Before completing this risk assessment you can see what is permitted in your tier by checking [this document](#).

The [government guidance for the safe use of places of worship during the pandemic](#) requires a COVID-19 risk assessment to be carried out for every building and site open to the public. This document provides a template risk assessment, with links to the relevant advice notes. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, the template is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to hold outdoor events, based on their local circumstances, resources and context. Specific guidance linking to advice on the lockdown period is available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Future versions of this document will be produced when there is any substantive change to the guidance on the safe use of places of worship.

Separate risk assessments for opening up church buildings to the public, and for access by contractors and construction workers are available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Carrying out a risk assessment

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:
 - Public worship
 - Carol concert
2. Consider the hazards:
 - Transmission of COVID-19
 - Hazards arising from using the church in a different way to usual, especially uneven outdoor areas and use when it is dark

Read the guidance and think about how it relates specifically to your church and/or the outdoor setting you will be using. What constraints are there? Consider how people will arrive and move across the site; circulation around the space ; also access to other areas including the toilet(s).

3. Consider who might be harmed and how? Read the guidance and think about how the activities you are planning will affect different groups of people. The risks are real but they are in many ways less than those for indoor worship as long as they are properly managed, but having more people coming to an event makes the possible impact – for example of someone with COVID-19 coming into contact with others – higher than in smaller venues with fewer people. Consider your particular circumstances and adapt the checklist below as appropriate.
4. Using the risk assessment checklist below as a template:
 - add in mitigations for any risks that are particular to your circumstances that may not be on the list;
 - record what you need to do for each activity to go ahead safely;
 - consider any equipment you need and any temporary changes you might need to make to the church;
 - check back against your list of activities to confirm which ones can go ahead and when.

Risk assessment for Outdoor Carol Services

Saturday 19th December at 3pm

Monday 21st December at 6pm

Wednesday 23rd December at 4pm

Church:	Assessor's name:	Date completed:	Review date:
St Peter's Maney	Rev Becky Stephens	10/12/2020	19/12/2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Deciding whether it is safe to hold an outdoor event Risk: contracting or spreading the virus by not social distancing or by touching contaminated services	Consider if anyone required for the running of the service or event is clinically extremely vulnerable or has household members who are. Ensure that the people who need to attend the site to enable the service to take place are willing to do so and can do so safely.	Choir members and musicians have vulnerable members among them. Therefore, they will be kept at a greater than 2m distance from one another and those gathering. Volunteer stewards should not be among the vulnerable categories.	Becky	
	Consider how the tier system applies to the site and the worship envisaged. For gathered congregations or one-off services drawing people from a wide area, consider whether anybody attending would be likely to be traveling from a higher or lower tier.	We are tier 3, no one should be attending from beyond the Sutton Coldfield area for the first 2 services. The third service is on the first day	Becky and Fay (signs)	

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		<p>that Christmas bubbles can form.</p> <p>All households/bubbles should gather together ensuring a 2m distance is kept from others. This will be reinforced on signs and by the Leader (Becky).</p>		
	<p>Assess the site, taking into account the need for people from different households to remain 2m apart from each other, and the recommendation that outdoor events have seats for audiences. Consider if the capacity of the site will work with the events you are planning.</p>	<p>Distanced capacity is for 17 bubbles. Acknowledging guidelines to reduce capacity we will allow for 15 bubbles at each of the 3 carol services.</p>		
	<p>Assess the availability of utilities such as electricity that might be needed, especially for events taking place in the hours of darkness e.g. for lights, microphones. Do you have the correct safety equipment for outdoor use?</p>	<p>The church grounds are lit by flood lighting. Those gathering will be encouraged to bring a torch. A letter will be emailed outlining some advice to those who book and information will go on the website.</p>	Becky and Fay	
	<p>Consider accessibility issues such as access to the site for those who use wheelchairs or have difficulty walking, and also how people who are deaf or hearing impaired will be able to participate (make use of microphones and good lighting).</p>	<p>Wheelchair users will be able to gather on the paved car park area which will be closed off to cars. Becky will try and borrow a portable PA system. If this is</p>	Becky and Fay	

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		not possible, we will ensure those who are hard of hearing have space reserved towards the front.		
	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	N/A		
	Consider if a booking and seat-allocation system is needed	We will have a booking system which Fay will organise. People will be invited to bring their own seating which can be placed in their allocated area.	Becky and Fay	
	Communicate with nearby churches to ensure offered provisions are complementary.	<p>HT aren't having carols, Emanuel are holding an outdoor carol service on a different date and St Michael's are holding a carol service on Christmas Eve.</p> <p>We are still going to be involved in the Churches Together Doorstep carols on the 21st December.</p>	Becky	10/12/2020
Preparation of the site for access by members of the public for outdoor worship	Set up a one-way route around the site to aid distancing measures. Indicate this with notices, keeping emergency exits available at all times.	Entrance is to be via the car park, exit via the lychgate and car park. These two entrances remain open at all		

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Risk: Getting or spreading coronavirus in common use high traffic areas such as corridors, toilet facilities, entry/exit points and other communal areas.		times, signs show which are in and out. Wheelchair users and those who are less able will enter and exit via the carpark entrance. Entrance through Tower Walk will be closed during the service.		
	Clearly mark out seating or (if seating is not possible) standing areas, including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Stewards will lead bubbles to available space	Becky and others	
	If ticketing/booking is being used, decide how best to manage that process e.g. specific points of entry, barriers.	Someone at the entrance with a list as people arrive. This person must not be a vulnerable person.	Becky	
	Read the CofE guide on face coverings and produce signage or other relevant materials to indicate compliance with the law requiring these for all except those exempt.	We will advise people to wear a mask until they are in their allocated space. Leaders and volunteers should wear a face covering whilst they are within 2m of other people. Choir and leader can remove mask when everyone is in the bubble spaces.		
	Identify where you can reduce the contact of	Song words will be on the website for people to		

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	people with surfaces, e.g. by using electronic documents rather than paperwork. If paper service sheets are to be used agree a process for handing them out safely and encourage people to take them home with them.	download on their phones or bring with them. Those without computers/printers can ask for a copy of the words which they will be given on arrival. This must be taken home by the user.		
	Ensure you have an NHS Track and Trace QR code available, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system.	Consult advice on complying with Track and Trace . The QR code should be placed outside for the events.	Fay	
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media with information for visitors. Communicate details on requirements such as bringing a face covering.		Becky and Fay	
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	n/a		
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.		Fay	
	Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands.	n/a		

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	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	n/a as building will not be open to the public		
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	n/a		
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	n/a		
	Ensure that safety procedures are in place for closing the site down – e.g. providing gloves and masks to those stacking chairs or moving electrical/staging equipment.	n/a		