



ELECTRICAL AND GAS SAFETY

Electrical Safety

All electrical work (such as installation work, testing and remedial work) should be undertaken only by an approved contractor registered with the Electrical Contractors Association (ECA) and particularly, the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC).

Work must accord with BS 7671:1992 (including any Amendments subsequently issued) and completion and test certificates should also be provided in accordance with this standard.

Periodic Inspection and Testing should be undertaken at least every 5 years by an approved electrical contractor with resulting remedial works being undertaken without delay. Any unsafe and dangerous electrical installations should be electrically isolated immediately and not re-connected until they are made safe.

Fire alarm installations and emergency lighting installations should similarly be installed and regularly tested by approved contractors with quarterly and 6 monthly inspections by a competent person in addition to Periodic Inspection and Tests on a 5 and 3 yearly basis respectively. (This is in accordance with BS5839:1992 and BS5266 Part 1)

All electric appliances fitted with a plug (including those loaned, borrowed, hired etc.), in all church premises should be subjected to an inspection and test (Portable Appliance Testing) in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, the Electricity at Work Regulations and the EC Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations.

This work should be undertaken at least annually and only by a competent person who is suitably qualified and equipped to undertake such inspection and testing. All satisfactorily tested appliance leads should be fitted with a referenced and dated label by the tester making reference to a schedule of church equipment requiring such inspection and testing.

All records of electrical testing and certificates should be retained by the church on the premises to which they relate and made available as appropriate.

Organs

The hazards associated with a pipe organ are not always fully appreciated and so some guidelines are appropriate.

Lights provided for illuminating the music desk or to facilitate internal inspection of the instrument should only be installed by a qualified electrician using permanent wiring. If a portable electric heater is required for the organist or to maintain the temperature of the organ in cold weather, this should be of the convector or fan-assisted type fitted with a cut-out that operates in the event of overheating.

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The electric action of the organ should be maintained and modified only by a professional organ builder. The blower is a common source of fire and it should therefore be examined by a competent electrical engineer at least once every five years and preferable annually. It is vital that the blower is switched off whenever the organ is not in use.

Electricity at Work regulations 1989

Where one or more persons are employed by the church under a Contract of Employment (e.g. a caretaker), these regulations apply and are quite onerous. Any work undertaken by an employee must be carried out in such a manner that no hazard is created as a result. Churches should also ensure that contractors or qualified "members" giving their labour free are aware of the requirements of the regulations. Before commencing work, they should confirm in writing that they have employer's liability and public liability insurance cover and a thorough knowledge of the regulations and of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Gas Safety

The installation of all gas pipe work and appliances in all church premises should only be undertaken by a Registered Gas Installer. Any gas appliances in use on the premises (including heating systems) should be checked for safety at least annually. The person carrying out the check needs to be competent and this is assured by using someone who is in membership of CORGI (The Council of Registered Gas Installers). It is a legal requirement that anyone carrying out work on gas appliances is CORGI registered.

Accurate and up to date records of all gas appliance maintenance and inspections, including gas maintenance contracts, should be maintained by each church and made available as appropriate.