

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and
Safety Policy*

Health, Safety and
Fire Safety Policy
Holy Family Church,
Ballymagroarty,
Derry

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Policy*

At the Holy Family Church, Ballymagroarty, our aim is to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of our members of members of the public, priests, staff, our volunteers that use our premises. Our aim is to ensure that our premises provide a safe environment for all, by controlling the hazards in and around our premises and the hazards caused by what we do.

Everyone visiting the church are asked to help us maintain a safe environment. by This includes reporting hazards, accidents and dangerous occurrences. You are asked to look after the safety equipment provided and to follow safety instructions and signs.

The Holy Family Church at Ballymagroarty will follow the overall guidance of the Diocese of Derry Health and Safety Policy, and of health and safety advice as it becomes available from the Diocese.

The Parish Priest¹ has the overall responsibility for health and safety at the church. A Health and Safety Advisor² is appointed by the Parish Priest to assist in developing and implementing health and safety measures. The church is grateful for the assistance of volunteer members of the church community who are essential in the successful implementation of this policy.

This policy recognises that improvements in health and safety at the church are necessary.

The Health and Safety Advisor will make monthly reports of the current status of health ,safety and fire prevention measures to the Parish Priest and the Church Finance Committee. Items of expenditure will be discussed at this Finance Committee.

Details of the procedures and plans in order to achieve the goals of this policy are contained in a Health and Safety Manual (see below).

This policy will be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary.

Signed:

Notes on status at the time of creating this policy in January 2026:

1. Parish Priest – Fr Joe Gormley
2. Health and Safety Adviser – Trevor J Hughes

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Manual*

Safety Manual

This section sets out our arrangements to minimise, as far as is reasonably practicable, risks to the health and safety of employees, voluntary workers, members of the congregation, members of the public, visitors, and contractors.

1. ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID

First Aid boxes are located opposite the sacristy and in the presbytery.

A DEFIBRILATOR is located opposite the sacristy, along with a CPR mask.

The church promotes familiarity with First Aid measures through periodic courses.

An accident book is located in the Secretaries office. All accidents and incidents must be entered in the accident book, for the primary purpose of learning how to prevent such incidents in the future.

2. FIRE SAFETY

The church will undertake the following:

- An assessment of the fire risks in the church and presbytery¹
- An annual fire drill to check that people can escape safely².

Note 1: Presbytery fire risk assessment completed in 2022. Church fire risk assessment planned along with the church refurbishment.

Note 2: To be arranged.

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Manual*

- A regular check that our fire fighting equipment is in place and is serviceable, and that there is an annual maintenance contract in place with a reputable company
- A weekly test of the fire alarm system is carried out as part of the safety audit.
- A six monthly service of the fire alarm system is to be undertaken by the service provider.
- Fire wardens have been trained, and primarily comprise the priests who routinely conduct service and the sacristans who prepare every Mass.
- Church staff are trained in fire awareness, along with the fire wardens.

If a fire is discovered (no matter how small):

- Immediately raise the alarm
- Telephone the emergency services
- Check the building for occupants
- Attack the fire if possible, within your capability using the appliances provided, but without taking personal risk
- If it is not possible to attack the fire, or if you are unsure which fire extinguisher to use, assist in the evacuation of the building, ensuring that all doors are closed behind you. The priority is people before property
- Ensure clear access for emergency vehicles

3. ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- a) At regular intervals, plugs, cables and sockets to be inspected to ensure there are no loose connections, worn flexes or trailing leads. Any repairs needed to be carried out by a competent electrician³.
- b) Every five years the fixed electrical system to be inspected and tested by a competent contractor who is a member of the NICEIC, ECA or other approved body⁴.

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Manual*

- c) At intervals of not more than five years the lightning conductor system to be examined and tested by a competent contractor⁵.

Note 3: Scheduled

Note 4: Completed 2022 with items for correction

Note 5: Status to be determined.

- d) Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury. Faulty electrical equipment can kill. All employees and voluntary workers must observe the following:

- Visually check all electrical equipment before use
- Report all faults immediately to the health and safety coordinator
- Do not attempt to use or repair faulty equipment
- Electrical equipment should be switched off and disconnected when not in use for long periods
- Flexible cables should be so positioned and so protected that they do not constitute a tripping hazard and are not subject to damage

4. GAS EQUIPMENT SAFETY

Gas boilers and any other gas equipment to be maintained and checked annually by a competent contractor who is a Gas Safe registered gas installer. Any necessary work required for safety to be implemented immediately⁶.

Note 6: Completed December 2024.

5. HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

Hazardous substances in use at the church are minimal and largely comprise cleaning and disinfectant fluids. Follow the instructions on the packaging.

6. SAFETY OF PLANT AND MACHINERY

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Manual*

Any plant and machinery, other than office and cleaning equipment, is provided by contractors who provide the trained personnel to operate.

Employees and voluntary workers must not operate plant or machinery that they are not trained and authorised to use

Ladders may only be used when they can be safely secured. This may necessitate the use of ladder ties or a two-person operation

Any defect or damage found to any item of plant or machinery must be reported to the health and safety coordinator

7. SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS (condition of floors, steps and paths)

In order to reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the risk of slips, trips and falls, regular inspection to be made of floors and stairs in the church, and externally. Particular note to be made of moss, algae and leaves on paths. Any defects to be reported and repairs carried out. (see Safety Audit).

Salt is provided for de-icing of the walkways around the church in freezing conditions and voluntary workers are scheduled to carry out the salting task.

8. LIGHTING and EMERGENCY LIGHTING

In order to ensure that the church is adequately lit, regular inspections to be carried out ensuring that all lights in church, are working and are replaced as necessary. Regular testing of the Emergency Lighting will be carried out as part of the Safety Audit⁷.

Note 7: This is not currently possible. During the electrical audit of 2022 it was established that the emergency lighting system needs repair. During the church refurbishment a new system is anticipated which will be amenable to self test.

9. WORKING AT HIGH LEVELS

Only contractors or competent volunteers approved by the health and safety coordinator may work at high levels, subject to the necessary safety provisions being in place. A high level is any level where an injury could result from a fall.

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Manual*

10. MANUAL HANDLING (Lifting, Carrying and Moving Loads)

Our policy is to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as reasonably practicable. Where it is not possible to avoid the need to move loads, we will carry out risk assessments and make use of lifting aids, including trolleys, lifts and hoists as far as possible.

The necessary training will be given to all those employees and voluntary workers who are required to undertake manual handling.

Only those persons who have received the appropriate training are authorised to undertake manual handling tasks.

11. BUILDING / GLAZING Hazards

Our policy is to ensure that our building is safe and without risks to the health, safety and welfare of all who work in or use it. In order to achieve this, the church is regularly inspected and any defects noted are immediately reported and the procedures put in hand for repairs.

Where necessary, temporary measures are taken to ensure that there is no risk of accident or injury until permanent repairs can be carried out.

A check is made of all glazing in the building to ensure that any glass in windows below waist height, and in doors and beside doors below shoulder height, is of a safety material or is protected against breakage.

12. CONTRACTORS

Anyone entering church premises for the purpose of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church, will be regarded as a contractor. All contractors, including the self-employed, must abide by the following:

- Have their own health and safety policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy of the same

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Manual*

- Produce evidence that they have appropriate public and employer's liability insurance in place. A record of this evidence will be maintained
- Comply with all requirements of this health and safety policy and cooperate with the church officials in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of operation
- Where plant and machinery is brought onto church premises by contractors, they must be able to show where necessary that the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure its safe operation
- Contractors may only use sub-contractors or persons other than their own direct employees with the express permission of the church officials. However, responsibility will remain with the contractors.

The following table comprises the currently approved contractors:

T Donohoe Builders Ltd (contact : Tony Donohoe)	19/21 Chamberlain Street , Derry BT48 6LR 02871267244	General building works
North-West Mechanical Services (contact Gary Hegarty)	Unit 13 Elagh Business Park, Buncrana Road, Derry BT48 8HQ 02871 279008 Mob 07808774912	Gas Repairs
Energy-Tech (NI) (contact Steve Bermingham)	Unit 19 Armagh Business Park 02838870507	Gas Service and Test
ViS Security Solutions	Lynwood Business Centre, Campsie Industrial Estate, Dery BT47 3XX 02871812185	Fire alarm system
JMM Fire Security (contact : Kevin McConnellogue)	3B Hawthorn Terrace, Coleraine BT52 2BW 02870344883	Security system

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Manual*

13. SAFETY AUDIT

Weekly and monthly safety audits are carried out by the Health and Safety Advisor and volunteers (See Appendix 1).

14.RECORDS

A paper record of all audits, risk assessments, certificates etc is maintained by the Health and Safety Advisor in a dedicated Health and Safety folder for inspection by any parishioner or public body. An electronic version will also be maintained.

15.ACTION TRACKING

A list of all outstanding actions will be maintained and prioritised.

Note 8: It is recognised that not all safety issues can be immediately rectified. Parishioners are asked to recognise that the issues raised will be addressed in due course. The action list will be made available in the Health and Safety Folder

16.RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessments will be made for unusual or new circumstances.

17. PARTS OF THE SAFETY MANUAL TO BE DEVELOPED

Further parts of the safety manual will be developed in due course include:

- i) Prevention of Legionnaires disease
- ii) Asbestos survey

Reviewed **[Insert Date When Policy Was Last Reviewed]**

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Manual*

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Manual*

APPENDIX 1 WEEKLY/MONTHLY AUDIT EXAMPLE

Name of person carrying out this review:	Trevor and Liam (Monthly Check)
Date this review was carried out:	19 November 2025

Ref:	Check made	Weekly	Monthly	Checked	Action required/Comments
1	The first aid kits are located and complete (Sacristy, Secretary Office)	•		X	To be installed
2	Defibrillator in Sacristy, locked and indicating "OK"	•		√	Installed and OK
3	Fire alarm checks: Alarm panel indicating "OK" Fire alarm activated – indicate call point:	•		√	Fire alarm panel – 2 faults – needs repairs to be VESDA Fire alarm activation OK Used Call Point Boiler House
4	Security system to Secretary's Office – Doors open when fire alarm is activated or when call point is activated		•	√	
5	Pull chords in the 2 disabled toilets operate and reset		•	√	
6	An internal visual inspection has taken place in the offices, kitchen, church and ground floor of the parish house covering: - Absence of tripping hazards on floors and stairs - Any fixtures and fitting broken in a hazardous way - Normal lighting is working - Candles and wax collectors in good order - Handrails are secure - Cleaning materials properly stored - Emergency exits clear - Fire extinguishers are in their place and charged	•		√	OK Distribution board and plant room – Some refuse needs to be removed

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Manual*

	Plant room, boiler room and distribution board room				
7	An external visual inspection has taken place covering: - Car surface condition - The perimeter is safe i.e., no overhanging trees or foliage, unsafe walls or broken fences/gates which could injure passers-by. - Footpaths are clear of vegetation, moss or cracked and damaged paving stones/slabs likely to cause a trip hazard. - External handrails are secure. - External lighting is working. - Stairs, steps and slopes are clear with changes in level prominent. - Noted .Dry stone walling at grass verge in poor condition , concrete capping needs attention-possible PLIC - Handrails are secure.	•		√	OK

Holy Family Church , Ballymagroarty - *Health and Safety Manual*

Fire Alarm Call Points:

- 1 Church main porch
2. Inside church adjacent to main porch (Zone 5)
3. Church adjacent to door to Sacristy
4. Opposite fire alarm box
5. Presbytery downstairs
6. Presbytery upstairs
7. Boiler House

Note: RCD's now available

Temp lights now available for porch handrails

CPR Masks now ava