

Church Health & Safety

Tower tours checklist

The main reason tower tours are potentially very dangerous is that members of the public are being admitted to an area they would not normally visit and with which they are unfamiliar.

Church workers or volunteers who regularly enter the tower, such as bell-ringers and vergers, will be aware of the hazards and know what to expect. Members of the public entering for the first time will not. Ideally, members of the public should only be admitted to towers or other high levels, after appropriate checks are made for safety.

However, where it is decided to allow this on occasions such as Heritage Open Days, this checklist notes the main hazards and preventative measures that can be taken to reduce the risk.

Please also consult your bell-ringer Tower Captain to get their views on suitability and also to ensure that the bells are rung down before any tour takes place. Members of the public may be admitted whilst ringing is taking place under the supervision and guidance of the Tower Captain or suitable deputy.

Checklist (check and tick as appropriate)

Before holding tower tours, make sure you complete the checklist below. Check each item and tick 'yes' or 'no' as appropriate. If you put 'no' against any item you should take suitable actions to ensure visitors will be safe as reasonably possible.

Common hazards	Preventative measures	Please tick
Worn steps	Have steps been repaired and/or are they in good condition?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Loose debris and pigeon droppings	Are all staircases and walkways kept swept and cleaned?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Poor lighting	Has fixed bulkhead lighting been provided along the entire route?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Low beams, openings and projections	Is this route suitable? If yes, have you provided warning notices, marked with black and yellow hazard warning tape and fixed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

Continued overleaf...

Common hazards	Preventative measures	Please tick
Unrestricted access to dangerous areas	Have all doors leading onto roof areas or other high levels that are not part of the tour been locked?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
	If there was previously no door to these areas, has one been fitted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Falls from tower roofs	Are parapets and the lowest point of castellation a minimum of 1.1 metres in height?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
	Are gaps in parapets no wider than 150mm?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Slips and falls on tower roofs	Is access only allowed during fine weather and never in freezing temperatures?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
	Have drainage channels been fitted with duckboards?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
	Are handrails needed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Suitability of people wishing to take part	Are people warned regarding the physical effort required?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
	Do stewards have authority to use their own judgement and to decline to take up those they feel would 'struggle'?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Member of tour becoming ill or claustrophobic	Do stewards always carry a mobile phone (or two way radio) to summon assistance or, if a signal cannot be obtained, has a fixed landline phone been installed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Evacuation of somebody taken ill by stewards or the emergency services	Have you discussed this with the emergency services? <i>Possible routes if the stairs are unsuitable are through bell louvres if they exist, lowering through bell hatch, or a helicopter off tower roof</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of control over the group of visitors	Are detailed procedures in place covering the numbers allowed at any one time, the number of stewards and emergency procedures?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

Important advice

Slips, trips and falls on stairs

All staircases must be fitted with a handrail. Ideally for spiral staircases this should be a fixed metal handrail on the outer curve. Although not as effective, a simple way to install a handrail is to run a length of rope down the central column fixed at the top and bottom, ideally with intermediate fixings to stop hands becoming trapped.

Next steps

Once you have completed this checklist and taken any steps needed to mitigate any risks please make sure that a copy is kept with your Health & Safety Policy. Please make sure you keep copies of documents together at an accessible location. Please remember you should regularly review your Health & Safety Policy and your risk assessments. We recommend that you include Health & Safety as a regular item in the agenda for your PCC meetings. For further help on specific topics we have the following checklists to help you:

Fire, Electrical and Other Hazards

Working at Height

Slips, Trips and Falls

Tower Tours

Food Preparation

Information in this document

We have prepared this guide in good faith. The information in it is based on our understanding of current law and practice. Neither Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc nor any of its subsidiaries accept any liability whatsoever for any errors or omissions in this guide that result in injury, loss or damage, including financial loss. It is the responsibility of the Insured or any person to ensure that they comply with their statutory obligations. Any interpretation or implementation of this guide is at the sole discretion of the reader.

© Ecclesiastical Insurance Group plc 2015

This document may be copied and amended for the use of individual churches only but may not otherwise be copied or sold in any format including electronic retrieval systems.

How do I make an insurance claim?

Please call **0345 603 8381** to speak to our Claims Department. You can also email faithclaims@ecclesiastical.com or visit our website to request or download a claim form.

For Property Claims we'll need to know:

- your policy number
- what loss or damage has occurred
- when, how and where the loss or damage occurred
- your VAT status (if applicable)
- your bank details for settlement, if applicable.

If your claim involves theft, malicious damage or accidental loss, we'll also need to know:

- when you notified the police
- your crime reference number
- details of the police station dealing with the incident.



Read the claims guidance on our website

For further information call us on

0345 777 3322

(Monday to Friday 8am-6pm excluding bank holidays)
We may monitor or record calls to improve our service.

You can email us at

churches@ecclesiastical.com

or visit

www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters

Other useful contacts

Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services **0800 107 0190**

www.ecclesiastical.com/getadvice

Ecclesiastical Home Insurance

0800 917 3345

