



### Introduction

The Fire Scotland Act (2005) and the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (SSSR) 1996 govern the provision of safety signs in churches and church halls.

The latter regulations cover 4 types of signs –

- Prohibition Signs – which should be circular, red and white.
- Warning Signs – triangular, and black on yellow.
- Mandatory Signs – circular, blue and white.
- Safe Condition – oblong or square, prime colours, green and white, such as the fire exit signs shown opposite.

These different types of signs are used to denote “Means of Escape” signage, “Fire Equipment Identification”, “Fire action Notices”, and “No Smoking” signage. This information sheet considers each in turn.



Figure 1: Examples of escape route signage.

### Escape Signage

The objective of escape route signage is to ensure that exits are identified from any place within the premises, and indicate the safe direction of travel if the location of the exit is hidden or not obvious.

In addition the signs need to be positioned in such a way to be visible and denote the route with the shortest distance to the exit. The location of assembly points (and refuges if present) should also be identified.

The size of the sign is dependent upon the viewing distance and the type; standard, photoluminescent, or internally or externally illuminated. Whichever it is it needs to be big enough to be seen and do its job.

Therefore to ensure your church premises escape signage is adequate you should consider the following:

- sufficient in the premises to ensure people can escape.
- Positioned in the correct places.
- Visible.
- Clear and not confusing.

The signage shown above - a white pictogram on a green background and depicting a running person framed in a doorway, with an arrow showing the direction represents the current standard. Whilst there is no direct legislation that requires older signs to be replaced consideration should be given to the need for uniformity in situations where different signs may create confusion.

As to the precise positioning of signage the following are the accepted guidelines:

- fix the sign between 2m and 2.5m off the ground when positioned above a door, or suspended from a ceiling.
- fix the sign between 1.7m and 2m off the ground when affixed to walls.
- fix signs in such a way that when one sign has been passed by a person in the process of exiting the building the next one is immediately visible.



### Escape Signage (continued)

- You should also note that an exit/fire exit sign without an arrow on it should be used if that doorway is the final exit leading to a place of safety.

British Standard BS 5499 part 4 provides further specific guidance on escape route signing and guidance on the selection and use of escape routes.

It is also important that all escape routes are kept unobstructed and are accessible at all times. It may have been identified in the Fire Risk Assessment that corridors in the church hall or church are being inadvertently obstructed or that fire doors are being left open.

In such circumstances and as a general precaution it may also be advisable to also display the following notices upon Fire Doors (Figure 2), and corridors (Figure 3).

Figure 2



Figure 3



You should also consider the circumstances of any disabled members of staff or the public who may not be able to escape via the existing means. Routes that are accessible by wheelchair and any refuge points should be clearly identified.

An example of such signage is shown below, (Figure 4).

Figure 4





### Fire Equipment Signage

Fire equipment signage should be used to clearly identify the location and type of the various items of fire fighting equipment located within the premises.

They are used for example to indicate fire alarm call points, fire extinguisher types and locations, and the presence of hose reels.

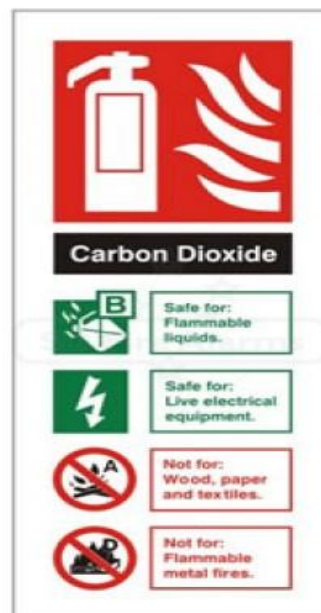
They are coloured red with a white pictogram depicting whichever piece of equipment is in position.

The examples below include Fire Alarm Call Point (Figure 5) and a Carbon Dioxide Fire Extinguisher (Figure 6). The latter provides easily accessible information upon the type of extinguisher it is and the different types of fires it can be used upon.

Figure 5



Figure 6



### Fire Action Notices

It is a requirement that occupants of church premises know what to do in the event of a fire. Fire action notices positioned at suitable places such as notice boards or fire alarm call points where a fire alarm is installed will provide occupants with a constant and visible reminder of the procedures to be followed.

Fire Action notices come in a number of forms and several examples are shown in Appendix 1



### No Smoking Signs

As church halls and churches are open to the public you are required to display 'No Smoking' signs, so that they can be seen and read by people in the premises and approaching the premises. The minimum signage requirement for premises is a 'No Smoking' notice which:

- Is at least 230mm by 160mm in size and states that the premises are no-smoking premises and that it is an offence to smoke there or knowingly to permit smoking there.
- Displays the international 'No Smoking' symbol, at least 85mm in diameter.
- Displays the name of the person to whom a complaint may be made by anyone who observes someone smoking.

It's up to the church officer in control of the premises to decide on the number of notices required to make sure everybody on the premises is made aware that smoking is not allowed.

An example of the notice is displayed below, (Figure 7).

**Figure 7**





## Appendix 1: Fire Action Notices

Example 1



Example 2





### References:

1. Clearing the air Scotland

<http://www.clearingtheairscotland.com/faqs/guidance.html>

2. Fire Scotland Act

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/5/contents>

3. British Standard 5499-4

[http://www.standardscentre.co.uk/search\\_result.php?search=BS%205499&kw=bs%205499&ad=5115945923&gclid=CKeL6cPh-b8CFQkFwwod6hwAVQ](http://www.standardscentre.co.uk/search_result.php?search=BS%205499&kw=bs%205499&ad=5115945923&gclid=CKeL6cPh-b8CFQkFwwod6hwAVQ)

4. Practical Fire Safety Guidance for places of Entertainment & Assembly (there is no specific guide available for churches)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/public-safety/Fire-Rescue/FireLaw/FireLaw/SectorSpecificGuidance/PlacesEntertainment/EntertainmentPremises>

5. Health & Safety Executive Fire Safety

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/fire.htm>

6. Church of Scotland Insurance Services Ltd

<http://www.cosic.co.uk/guidelines>

### CHURCH OF SCOTLAND INSURANCE SERVICES CONTACT INFORMATION

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THESE GUIDELINES  
OR ANY OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO YOUR CHURCH  
INSURANCE SCHEME POLICY PLEASE CONTACT US.

TELEPHONE: 0131 220 4119.

IF YOU PREFER YOU CAN E-MAIL US AT:

[ENQUIRIES@COSIC.CO.UK](mailto:ENQUIRIES@COSIC.CO.UK)

OR VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT:

[WWW.COSIC.CO.UK](http://WWW.COSIC.CO.UK)

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