

Cowden Village Hall Health & Safety Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

This document is the Health and Safety Policy of Cowden Village Hall.

Our policy is to provide healthy and safe working conditions, equipment and systems of work for our volunteers, committee members and hirers by ensuring Village Hall Equipment is maintained in a safe condition for all users and to provide training and information as necessary to volunteers and users.

It is the intention of Cowden Village Hall Committee to comply with all Health and Safety legislation and to act positively, where reasonably possible, to prevent injury, ill health or any danger arising from activities within the hall.

Employees, volunteers, hirers, users and visitors are expected to recognise that there is a duty on them to comply with the practices set out by the committee, with all safety requirements set out in hiring agreements and with safety notices on the premises and to accept responsibility to do everything they can to prevent injury to themselves or others.

Organisation of Health and Safety

It is the duty of all employees, volunteers, hirers, users and visitors to take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their activities and to co-operate with the Village Hall Committee in keeping the premises safe and healthy, including the grounds.

Should anyone using the hall come across a fault, damage or other situation that might cause injury and cannot be rectified they should inform a management committee member as soon as possible so the problem can be dealt with. Where equipment is damaged a notice should be placed on it warning that it should not be used. A committee member should also be notified.

The following items are maintained and where appropriate reviewed by the management committee:

- First Aid Box
- Risk Assessments
- Information to contractors
- Insurance
- Information (including Hiring Terms and Conditions) for hirers
- Health and Safety Policy

Introduction

Cowden Village Hall Management Committee has drawn up this policy to clarify procedures and areas of responsibility in ensuring the health and safety of its users.

The Village Hall Committee is responsible for running the Village hall and wants to ensure the safety of people using it.

No one can guarantee total protection against accidents, however precautions will be taken where possible to ensure the health and safety of employees and users of the hall.

Mitigation of Risk

To mitigate risk the village hall committee has taken the following steps:

- To carry out a full risk assessment every two years or sooner if deemed necessary by the committee.
- Ensure that there is a copy of the Health and Safety policy located in the hall.
- Ensure that all hirers are made aware of the Health and Safety Policy and the Fire Evacuation Procedures (Appendix 1).

Health and Safety objectives

This section covers a brief description of legislation and how it would apply. This is carried out by a thorough risk assessment and by good housekeeping.

The fundamental legislation Health and Safety at Work Act requires that the village hall committee, as the managers of the premises, ensure the health and safety of others that use the hall.

It encompasses every aspect of the premises, which includes equipment, paths, surfaces, chairs and escape routes.

Health and Safety risks are to be identified and appropriate action taken to minimise the risk or eliminate the risk.

The Village Hall Committee must ensure the following:

Provide a safe place for people to operate by:

- Identifying and assessing all risk of the hazards associated with the premises or activities held there, which may have an effect on the health and safety of others that use the premises.
- Carry out a risk assessment using persons that are competent.
- Take action to eliminate or reduce hazards.
- Demonstrate that arrangements are in place.
- Review arrangements when changes occur.

- Provide information on health and safety.
- Provide appropriate supervision to ensure the health, safety and welfare of others if required and requested.

The Workplace (Health and Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

A workplace is defined as any premises where people perform physical or mental work to earn a living.

These regulations aim to protect volunteers and hirers' health from injury or long-term illness whilst using the hall and includes:

- Adequate ventilation
- A reasonable temperature not below 16 Celsius
- Suitable lighting and seating
- A clean premises with no tripping hazards
- Suitably maintained machinery and equipment
- Sufficient toilets with hot and cold running water, soap and towels
- Accessible drinking water and suitable facilities for rest and eating

Prevention of fire

The Village Hall Committee has appointed a Fire Safety Officer. The purpose of this appointment is to reduce the risk and prevent a fire occurring. The following activities are carried out by the Fire Safety Officer:

- A fire Risk Assessment (as part of the overall Risk Assessment).
- Precautions to be put in place where necessary and where it is reasonable to do so/
- Ongoing checks and maintenance of fire safety equipment in conjunction with fire maintenance services.
- Exits are clearly marked, accessible and functional.

Hazardous items that must not be used in the Village Hall and premises without authorisation by the Village Hall Committee. These include:

- Flammable liquids
- Electrical equipment producing heat
- BBQ equipment
- Fireworks
- Inflatable entertainment equipment (Bouncy castle, etc)

Preventative and protective measures must be taken in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy as follows:

- Smoking is forbidden inside the hall.

- Flammable substances must either be replaced with an inflammable equivalent or, when this is impossible, ensure measures taken to control the risk.
- Storage of combustible material near a source of ignition is not permitted
- Emergency exit and routes to them must be kept clear at all times
- Appropriate Fire Fighting Equipment is provided
- Fire Equipment is maintained and checked annually
- Others including hirers and volunteers have access to the Health and Safety Policy and the risk assessments.

Important issues associated with the Health and Safety in Cowden Village Hall

Working Alone

Volunteers, hirers, contractors or tradesmen should not work alone on the property particularly if they are using ladders, chemicals or equipment that might pose a danger. When jobs have been assessed as low risk, it is the individual's responsibility to ensure they are equipped with a mobile phone or lone worker alarm.

Children

Minors under the age of 18 must be accompanied and supervised by a responsible adult at all times. In the event of children's parties or activity groups, the hirer shall take responsibility for the adult to child ratio, ensuring adequate safety and care for the age of the children attending.

Adult to child ratios recommended by the NSPCC are:

- Aged 0 - 2 years: 1 adult to 3 children
- Aged 2 - 3 years: 1 adult to 4 children
- Aged 4 - 8 years: 1 adult to 6 children
- Aged 9 - 12 years: 1 adult to 8 children
- Aged 13 - 18 years: 1 adult to 10 children.

Small children under the age of 12 are not permitted in the kitchen. This is to avoid the risk of scalds, burns cuts and other injuries occurring.

Stage area

All users should be vigilant around the stage area to avoid the possibility of falling from the stage edge. Children should always be supervised when using the stage.

Electrical safety

The following must be adhered to:

- Electrical appliances must not be left unsupervised when in operation

- Plug sockets must not be overloaded
- Should users / hirers want to bring electrical appliances onto the premises they must make the management committee aware of this. The user / hirer are responsible for ensuring that the appliance meets safety standards (i.e. has been PAT tested)
- Electrical equipment showing signs of damage, exposure of components, water damage etc should not be touched or operated
- Users have a responsibility to ensure that all electrical appliances are shut off when leaving the hall
- Trailing wires or cables are a trip hazard and should be taped down

Heating

Portable heating appliances should not be used in the hall. The hall has an oil fired central heating system with radiators throughout the premises. Thermostatic controls are located in the hall, clubroom and main hall for zonal control. Should users suspect any damage to the heating system then the heating system should not be used. The management committee should be informed immediately.

Users are responsible for ensuring that the heating system is turned off at the thermostatic controls when leaving the premises. In the cold winter months, the committee may give instruction to leave heaters in the main hall only running at minimum temperature between hires.

Housekeeping

The hall is cleaned and safety checked on a regular basis. However, every user has a responsibility to ensure that the hall is left clean and tidy. The management committee cannot guarantee that the hall will be cleaned between each use.

All users must use the rubbish bins. Any major spillage, damage or accident should be reported to the committee. Food, drink, perishable items and rubbish must be taken away at the end of each hire.

The paths outside and frontage of the hall must be kept clear of litter.

Noise

The hall is situated in a residential area, therefore we ask that users are considerate and keep noise levels to a minimum. Any form of music must be kept to an acceptable level. Users should also be considerate when leaving the hall.

Parking

Parking outside the hall is limited. Please do not obstruct driveways or block the road. Parking in the local area is carried out at the users' risk.

Accident Reporting Procedure

Accident Report Forms are available in the kitchen. Any accident occurring during use of the hall must be recorded by hirers. To ensure that personal data is kept confidential, individual records are removed and held separately by the Management Committee. The cause of accidents will be investigated so as to reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

The following must be reported:

- A Death
- Major or minor Injury
- A dangerous occurrence

Hirers must report any accidents to a member of the Management Committee.

In the event of an emergency, the nearest hospital with a minor injuries unit is:

**Edenbridge and District Memorial Hospital,
Mill Hill,
Edenbridge,
Kent,
TN8 5DA**

Telephone: 01732 863164

Insurance

The hall is insured as follows:

Policy type: Village and Community Hall Insurance

Policy number: CCP 2201845

Insurer: Ansvar Insurance via broker Norris & Fisher (Village Hall Scheme) Ltd

Hiring Procedure

Every hirer of the premises must familiarise his / herself with the Health and Safety Policy. A hard copy of this agreement is located in the kitchen.

Appendix 1. Fire Evacuation Procedures

IN CASE OF FIRE

	<p>The hirer is deemed the “Responsible Person” and is designated the person in charge of the hall during your hire.</p> <p>It is advisable to make a note of the name of each person attending your event (see step 1. Roll Call).</p>
1.	<p>In the event of a Fire, the Responsible Person will instruct all persons to leave the building using the nearest available Emergency Exit and to muster together as soon as possible on the large grassed area on the opposite side of the road from the hall main entrance.</p> <p>A Roll Call should be taken.</p>
2.	<p>No matter how small the fire, CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE ON 999</p> <p>Give this address: Cowden Village Hall, Chantlers Mead, Cowden, Edenbridge TN8 7HU</p> <p>There are no working public call boxes in the village. A mobile phone on the Three or O2 network offers the best reception.</p>
3.	<p>The Responsible Person should ensure that once the hall is vacated, members of the public do not re enter the building under any circumstances.</p>
4.	<p>On the arrival of the Fire Brigade, the Responsible Person should inform the Officer in Charge that a Roll Call has been taken and all persons are safe / there are missing persons.</p>
5.	<p>Attempts to extinguish the outbreak of the fire with the fire fighting equipment within the Hall should only be attempted if it is considered safe to do so. If in any doubt, vacate the building immediately.</p>
6.	<p>If all the above steps have been carried out, the management committee must be informed.</p>
7.	<p>All incidents of fire, however small, must be reported to the management committee.</p>