

# FIRE SAFETY AND SECURITY IN PLACES OF WORSHIP



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BRE is the UK's leading centre of expertise on the built environment, construction, energy use in buildings, fire prevention and control, and risk management. BRE Global is a part of the BRE Group, a world leading research, consultancy, training, testing and certification organisation, delivering sustainability and innovation across the built environment and beyond. The BRE Group is wholly owned by the BRE Trust, a registered charity aiming to advance knowledge, innovation and communication in all matters concerning the built environment for the benefit of all. All BRE Group profits are passed to the BRE Trust to promote its charitable objectives.

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IHS BRE Press publications are available from  
[www.ihsbrepres.com](http://www.ihsbrepres.com)  
or  
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We thank Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc for permission to use the photograph on page 9 in this guide.

Requests to copy any part of this publication should be made to the publisher:  
IHS BRE Press  
Garston, Watford WD25 9XX  
Tel: 01923 664761  
Email: [brepres@ihs.com](mailto:brepres@ihs.com)

Printed on paper sourced from responsibly managed forests.

BR 499

© BRE Global 2009

First published 2009

ISBN 978-1-84806-063-0

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# CONTENTS

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<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>ABOUT BRE GLOBAL</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>VII</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Aims of this guide	1
1.2 Places of worship and the law	2
1.2.1 <i>Fire safety regulations</i>	3
1.2.2 <i>Security regulations</i>	6
<b>2 FIRE SAFETY</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 How fires start and spread	10
2.1.1 <i>Common causes of fire</i>	10
2.1.2 <i>Materials that fuel fire</i>	11
2.1.3 <i>How fires spread and what kills</i>	12
2.2 Fire safety management	14
2.2.1 <i>Fire safety tasks</i>	14
2.3 Fire risk assessment	19
2.4 Fire safety training	22
2.4.1 <i>Minimising the risk of fire</i>	22
2.4.2 <i>If a fire occurs</i>	23
2.5 The fire emergency plan	24
2.6 Communicating the fire safety message	26
2.7 Fire safety features	28
2.7.1 <i>Passive fire protection</i>	29
2.7.2 <i>Active, or automatic, fire protection</i>	31
2.7.3 <i>Fire fighting equipment</i>	35
2.8 Escaping from fire	37
2.9 How safe is your place of worship?	39
2.10 Fire safety checklist	39
<b>3 SECURITY</b>	<b>43</b>
3.1 Security and understanding crime	44
3.1.1 <i>Terrorist activity</i>	44
3.1.2 <i>Assault</i>	45
3.1.3 <i>Robbery and armed robbery</i>	45
3.1.4 <i>Theft by those who use your building</i>	45
3.1.5 <i>Theft of property by the team</i>	46

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3.1.6 Theft from team members	46
3.1.7 Burglary	46
3.1.8 Vandalism	46
3.1.9 Arson	47
3.1.10 Computer crime	47
3.2 Organising security in order to reduce crime	48
3.2.1 Your role in the management of security	49
3.3 The walk through	49
3.3.1 What is a walk through?	49
3.3.2 Carrying out a walk through	50
3.4 Responding to the findings of your walk through	59
3.4.1 Improving the local environment	59
3.4.2 CCTV and the law	62
3.4.3 The exterior – deterring criminals	62
3.4.4 The interior – the importance of training	64
3.4.5 The interior – security inside the building	68
3.5 Special considerations	74
3.5.1 Addressing the threat of terrorism	74
3.5.2 Tackling arson	75
3.6 Security management – a suggested approach	75
3.6.1 Who manages security?	75
3.6.2 Crime review	76
3.6.3 Security risk assessment	76
3.6.4 Security emergency plan	79
3.7 CE marks and certification marks	80
3.8 Security checklist	81
<b>4 SOURCES OF SPECIALIST HELP, ADVICE AND TRAINING</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>INDEX</b>	<b>89</b>

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# FOREWORD

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This publication will be invaluable to all those who have responsibility for the care, not just of the fabric of places of worship, but also for the safety of those who worship in them, visit them, and work in them as employees or volunteers. In a time of ever increasing legislation, litigation and more vigorous enforcement of health and safety legislation, not to mention the problems of theft and vandalism, the duties placed on those with responsibility for premises are becoming more and more onerous. The responsibilities can seem so great that not knowing quite where to start means that nothing actually gets done. Unfortunately, doing nothing is no longer an option.

Starting with a background to the relevant legislation, this guide covers the basic principles of fire safety, how to carry out a fire risk assessment and the preparation of a fire emergency plan. Fire, however, is not the only threat to premises and people. Theft, terrorism and assault are also potential hazards which need to be addressed. A basic understanding of crime and how to prevent it are clearly explained.

As the leading faith insurer in the UK, Ecclesiastical strongly recommends that all those with responsibility for places of worship follow this guidance.



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# ABOUT BRE GLOBAL

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The BRE Group is a world-leading research, consultancy, training, testing and certification organisation, raising sustainability and delivering innovation across the built environment and beyond. Its mission is to 'build a better world'.

BRE Ltd, a major part of the group, provides a complete range of consultancy, testing and commissioned research services, covering all aspects of the built environment and associated industries. It also makes significant contributions to the development of national and international standards for construction and fire safety. Additionally, it provides a complete events management service for BRE and other organisations, with onsite facilities suitable for a range of events, from small meetings through to a fully serviced 190-seat lecture theatre.

BRE Global is another major part of BRE Group. It incorporates LPCB (the Loss Prevention Certification Board) and BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method). LPCB is an independent third party approvals body, offering certification of fire and security products and

services. It also produces the Red Book, which lists approved services and products, and which is used as a resource by specifiers. Similarly, Green Book Live (see [www.greenbooklive.com](http://www.greenbooklive.com)) brings together listings from BRE Group and a number of other organisations, including the Energy Savings Trust (for energy saving products) and One Planet Products (for products with green credentials). BREEAM provides a family of assessment methods and tools that are designed to help construction professionals understand and mitigate the environmental impacts of the developments they design and build. BRE Global organises training courses and events within the areas of fire, security and sustainability, and their world renowned team of experts and scientists are also involved in providing research and advisory services within their field of knowledge.

BRE Group is a wholly owned subsidiary company of the BRE Trust, which is a registered research and education charity.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BRE Global would like to thank:

- Ecclesiastical Insurance
- Members of the LPC's Fire and Security Board
- Members of CLG's Faith Communities Consultative Council (FCCC)
- Arson Prevention Bureau
- Christian Research
- Evangelical Alliance
- St Thomas Church, Watford
- St Paul's Church, Langleybury
- St Mary's Church, Watford
- St Luke's Church, Watford
- Eden Baptist Church, Cambridge
- Oxhey Chapel, Watford
- Hare Krishna Temple, Aldenham
- Corus Hotels plc

## **Disclaimer**

Any bad practice illustrated in this guide was deliberately set up for this purpose and is in no way indicative of any of the organisations or places included in this guide.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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There are approximately 70 000 places of worship in the UK, with millions of people attending every week. Every year there are over 100 major arson attacks on places of worship in the UK, and there are many thousands of incidents of theft and criminal damage. Violent attacks are also an everyday occurrence.

Day-to-day, your place of worship is likely to be a place of safety, contemplation and sanctuary, and every worshipper will have certain expectations when he or she decides to participate in its activities. Implicitly, each one has placed their trust in you. In addition to the risk to life, a fire or breach of security could seriously damage or even destroy your team and its work.

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## 1.1 AIMS OF THIS GUIDE

Throughout this guide, the phrase 'place of worship' includes all of the areas and buildings you are responsible for – not just the worship area. For example, you may be responsible for community halls, catering areas and other buildings not used specifically for worship-related activities. The information in this guide applies equally to these non-worship areas.

This guide is intended to provide practical information that will help you to generate a natural culture of fire safety and security awareness within the team responsible for managing your place of worship, and to protect your visitors and worshippers – as well as their property and your assets. It seeks to identify the important issues, and to enable you to foster a culture in which good fire safety and security practice become as familiar and normal to you and your team as your everyday efforts to prepare and care for your place of worship.

The key message in this guide is that excellence in these aspects of the running of your place of worship is achievable, and that you can naturally and easily maximise fire safety and security.

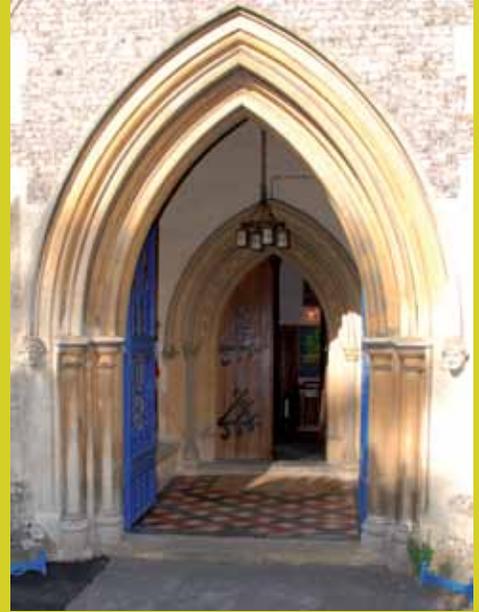
Fires and breaches of security occur and may kill or injure people and damage property for many different reasons. This guide does not aim to tell you everything there is to know about fire safety and security, but it will help you to protect the people and property you are responsible for. If in doubt, you should seek specialist help from an organisation that has the necessary experience and knowledge. One such organisation is the BRE Group, which is owned by the BRE



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This guide is intended to provide practical information on fire safety and security awareness to protect people and property. It provides invaluable information specifically related to the causes of fires in places of worship, fire safety management and ongoing support. It also provides insight into understanding and reducing crime, including potential terrorist activities, and how to manage security day-to-day.



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bre press

IHS BRE Press, Willoughby Road  
Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 8FB  
[www.ihsbrepres.com](http://www.ihsbrepres.com)  
**BR 499**

ISBN 978-1-84806-063-0

