

STANDARD 1

CREATING AND MAINTAINING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS GUIDANCE FOR INDICATOR 1.8

1.8A Guidance on Hazard Assessment of Activities with Children

Introduction

Hazard assessment is an important part of working with children. It assists with managing both health and safety issues, and the welfare of children.

As adults we assess hazards throughout our lives, but when working with children it is important to consider potential hazards that may lead to risk to children and to the adults who work with them. Consideration of how to control or manage hazard is critical. It is important to identify acceptable levels of hazards, as all risk cannot be removed.

Whilst this guidance is concerned primarily with hazards associated with failure to follow effective safeguarding practice, it must be understood alongside the health and safety regulation and policy of the Church body. Whilst the focus on hazard assessment should be on groups of children with whom you are working, as opposed to the physical venue, if a problem with the venue is discovered during the course of assessing (e.g. broken glass, electrical cabling, etc.) this needs to be raised with the appropriate authority in charge of health and safety for the Church body.

What does the term 'hazard' mean?

A hazard is a potential source of harm or adverse health effect on a person or persons. This may include areas such as:

- failure to comply with effective safeguarding practice, such as lack of supervision ratios or consent forms;
- medical hazards, such as failure to take medication, or inappropriate intimate care practice;
- physical hazards, such as dangerous electrical cabling, or proximity to water.

Assessing hazards

1. Identify the hazards: look for hazards in the nature of the activity, and in the place where you are holding the activity.
2. Identify who is at risk: decide who may be harmed and how. Everyone, or perhaps only certain people, may be at risk. Some groups may need special consideration as they may be more vulnerable to certain hazards.
3. Identify what the likelihood of harm may be.
4. Identify the consequences of injury or harm: the consequences could range from trivial to severe or even fatal. The most severe hazards need the most urgent attention.
5. Identify the controls that need to be put in place to limit the hazard.

These steps should be used to complete a hazard assessment form (Guidance 1.8A Template 1). If no hazard exists, you don't need to note it on the form.

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Reviews

Risk should be periodically reviewed, especially in circumstances when a venue changes, a new activity takes place or the members of the group change.