

FAITH - CHURCH SECURITY FACT SHEET

2015

KEY POINTS

- > Church Security
- > Keeping your church open
- > Other Resources



Church security

Every year, one in eight Churches suffer from theft, vandalism or arson. Insurance provides monetary compensation, but cannot compensate for the loss of a Church's history.

Follow these simple security steps

- Lock church after dark - unless there is a service, group activity, or someone present. Also, close and lock perimeter fencing gates and secure driveway access.
- Keep keys safe - with an official, or in a secure place away from the Church. Maintain a current list of key holders.
- Protect high-value items - chain items to the floor or wall (being mindful of heritage restrictions) or replace items with cheaper alternatives when services are not taking place.
- Lock away valuables/money - keep money, silver, brass and pewter items in a safe or secure area such as the vestry, or in a Church warden's home.
- Keep and monitor all receipts for deposits - investigate any discrepancies immediately.
- Divide responsibility for money - appoint different officials for collecting, counting and banking. Ensure no-one is left alone to count money.

Helpful hint

If you feel your church should normally be kept locked, you might like to consider making the key available to visitors. You could ask a local shop, Post Office or garage to safeguard the keys and take details of those visitors who wish to use them.

Information about where to obtain the keys can be displayed in the porch area or on the church notice board.

Keeping your church open

We are often asked whether churches should be kept locked at all times. Our answer is no, provided the right precautions have been taken. Indeed, we recommend, where appropriate that churches are kept open because of the positive effect that has on security.

Keeping churches open outside of services of worship is a vital element in the link they have with the community they serve and for historic buildings can also generate tourist revenue.

Other Resources

Visit the Ansvar Insurance website to access:

- > Public Liability policy documents
- > Risk Management Factsheets and action plans
- > People and property protection brochures
- > Links to useful websites and more



Tips for being open and secure

Churches wanting to be open need to find the right balance between accessibility and security. This means taking a few key steps:

- Carry out a full risk assessment
- Ensure local residents know that the church is operating an open door policy so that they can observe activity
- Encourage local people to pop into the church while passing by
- Draw up a rota of volunteer stewards to be present in church - but don't forget to consider their personal safety if for example, they might be alone in a church at any time
- Create a secure storage area in which all valuables can be locked.

You may also find it valuable to read our health and safety guidance available on the Ansvar website.

Will being open affect insurance premiums?

There is no impact on the church insurance premiums if a church is open during daylight hours and proper risk assessments have been completed.

If you have any concerns speak to your local insurance consultant & surveyor (IC&S) or call our customer services team on 1300 650 540.

Personal safety

Keeping yourself safe is about taking common sense steps to protect yourself when you might be in vulnerable situations such as being alone in a church, or locking up after an event or service. We do not want to alarm church employees and volunteers but we do have simple advice about what can be done to minimise the risks to your own safety and that of others.

Carrying out simple risk assessments.

In many churches people may have followed the same practices for many years without incident but this does not mean that they are safe. It is worth reassessing your procedures and practices for peace of mind, if nothing else.

Things to consider:

- Look out for any situations where there is potential for someone to be harmed – for example when alone in a building.
- Establish what the risk is – what is the likelihood of someone being harmed, taking into account the measures you already have in place to limit the consequences.
- Assess what additional measures are necessary and how these new measures are to be implemented.

For more information on what to consider, please speak with our Customer Risk Solutions Manager on 03 8630 3137