



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

# HEALTH AND SAFETY MANUAL

Resource for Presbyteries and Congregations

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## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which we live, work, gather and worship, and we pay our respects to their elders past and present. We acknowledge that the Church throughout this Synod meets on land for which First Peoples have ongoing spiritual sovereignty and custodianship, and we commit ourselves to respecting Country and to working for a more just future together.

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## Introduction

This *Health and Safety Manual* has been compiled by the Synod People and Culture team and relates to practically managing health and safety risks in relation to the activities conducted on UCA premises or under UCA auspices. It is a reference for presbyteries and congregations to assist them in fulfilling their legal obligation in Victoria and Tasmania to provide a safe environment for all employees, volunteers and visitors. It also explains the extent of their responsibilities in engaging contractors and consultants.



### Guide to online resources and references

The UCA online resources referred to in this manual are available for downloading from the OHS section of the Synod website:

[victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs/](http://victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs/)

OR

from other UCA website locations as specified.

See *Appendix 4: UCA website OHS resources guide* at the end of this manual for a complete guide to the OHS resources (content and location) on the Synod website.

The non-UCA (Other) online resources referred to in this manual can be sourced by using the titles listed as your search terms.

For information on managing and maintaining building and grounds safety, refer to the UCA Property Manual and/or the Property section of the Synod website:

[victas.uca.org.au/resources/property/](http://victas.uca.org.au/resources/property/)

For information about policies and procedures relating to safe behaviour, refer to the Safe Church section of the Synod website:

[safechurch.ucavictas.org.au](http://safechurch.ucavictas.org.au)

If you have any questions or feedback, please contact Synod OHS via email:

[SynodOHS@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:SynodOHS@victas.uca.org.au)

## 1. Uniting Church in Australia obligations

### 1.1 The law

The Uniting Church in Australia (Synod of Victoria and Tasmania) is obliged according to the *Victorian Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act 2004* and *Tasmanian Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2012* to provide a safe workplace for all employees and volunteers. This includes physical and psychological safety.

Under this legislation the Church is considered an ‘employer’ (Vic) or a ‘PCBU (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking)’ (Tas) or ‘a person with management or control of a workplace’ (Vic and Tas).

Everyone, including ministers, workers and volunteers, has a role to play in complying with the OHS legislation; however, the key legal responsibilities of the Church are shared between Presbytery, Church Council and congregations.

### Who is an employer / PCBU?

**Employer (Vic)** – an employer is a person or entity that employs one or more persons under contracts of employment or contracts of training (OHS Act section 5). An employer can be:

1. a person;
2. a company;
3. a partnership, unincorporated association, franchising operation, or not-for-profit organisation.

**PCBU (Tas)** – a PCBU (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking) is a business or an undertaking that is either conducted alone or with others, whether or not for profit or gain. A PCBU can be:

1. a sole trader (for example a self-employed person);
2. a partnership;
3. a company;
4. an unincorporated association;
5. a government department;
6. a public authority (including a municipal council).

### 1.2 Key responsibilities

In Victoria, ‘a person who has management or control of a workplace’ must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the workplace and the means of entering and leaving it are safe.

A ‘person’ includes a body corporate, unincorporated body or association, and a partnership. External legal advice has been sought to clarify and confirm the responsibilities of the positions held within the Church structure and in accordance with the Tasmanian Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation and the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation. These key responsibilities are defined below.

## 1.3 Key responsibilities definitions

### 1. Presbytery Standing Committee (PSC)

The Presbytery Standing Committee is appointed by the Presbytery Council

While the Presbytery Council itself will have obligations as an employer or PCBU, the role of the Presbytery Standing Committee is to assist the Presbytery Council to discharge its obligations.

### 2. Church Council

The Church Council is the body established in each congregation to have oversight of its total life and mission. Regulation 4.4.1 of the Uniting Church in Australia Regulations states:

*"subject to the regulations, the by-laws of the Synod and the rules of the Presbytery, the Church Council shall be responsible for the management and administration of all property of the Church acquired or held for the use of the congregation, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing shall:*

- a. be responsible for the care and maintenance of the property;*
- b. do such other things as are necessary or appropriate for the use and management of all property acquired or held for the congregation."*

The Church Council must meet its OHS obligations as an Employer/PCBU and as an Officer under the Act. To ensure those obligations are met you must:

1. Ensure Health and Safety as a standing agenda item at all committee meetings;
2. Ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood;
3. Assist in the development, implementation and reviews of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)/Work Health and Safety (WHS) Plan and OHS/WHS Activities calendar;
4. Review incidents, near misses and hazards reported to ensure all appropriate action has been taken to manage/prevent recurrence.

The Church Council must ensure also that:

- effective consultation directly with relevant parties, including workers and contractors;
- provision of training and instruction;
- reporting of incidents;
- conducting of emergency drills, maintenance of emergency plan/procedure;
- regular updating of schedules/plans to maintain a safe environment.

The Church Council must acquire and maintain up-to-date knowledge of safety matters and that sufficient resources are provided. That is, adequate financial, human and/or logistical resources must be provided to conduct activities in a controlled and safe manner.

### **3. Congregations and their representatives: minister / Church contact person / congregation leader**

Members of the congregation have individual responsibility to take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of others.

Church Council members who participate in making decisions that affect the congregation, including its financial standing, have a positive obligation to exercise due diligence (in Tasmania) and to take reasonable care (in Victoria) to ensure compliance with work health and safety laws.

It is important that ministers, Church contact persons and congregation leaders are aware of the need to:

- acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge of safety matters;
- gain an understanding of the nature of the congregation and the hazards and risks associated with its operations;
- ensure that appropriate resources and processes are available to the congregation to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety (and ensure that those resources and processes are used);
- ensure that the congregation has appropriate processes for receiving, considering and responding (in a timely manner) to information about incidents, hazards and risks;
- ensure that the congregation has appropriate processes for compliance with its duties and obligations under the OHS Act and that the processes are implemented; and
- verify the above.

### **4. Employees / Workers and volunteers**

Employees/workers, including volunteers, and contractors and visitors are required to take reasonable care for their own and others' safety. This includes:

- taking responsibility for personal safety and the safety of those around them;
- following the congregation's OHS/WHS policies, procedures and instructions;
- only performing tasks or activities if they are licensed, trained, competent, and physically and psychologically able to do so;
- challenging and reporting unsafe behaviour, bullying, harassment or discrimination;
- actively participating in discussions, emergency drills and training sessions;
- reporting hazards, incidents and near misses.

## 1.4 Legal terms definitions

Term	Meaning
<b>Employer (Victoria)</b>	<p>Employs one or more persons under contracts of employment or contracts of training (OHS Act section 5). An employer can be a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• person;</li> <li>• company;</li> <li>• partnership, unincorporated association, franchising operation, or not-for-profit organisation.</li> </ul>
<b>PCBU (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking) (Tasmania)</b>	<p>A business or an undertaking that is either conducted alone or with others, whether for profit or not. A PCBU can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a sole trader (for example a self-employed person);</li> <li>• a partnership;</li> <li>• a company;</li> <li>• an unincorporated association;</li> <li>• a government department;</li> <li>• a public authority (including a municipal council).</li> </ul>
<b>Officer</b>	<p>A person who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part of the organisation's business activities; has the capacity to significantly affect the corporation's financial standing and is to exercise due diligence.</p>
<b>Worker</b>	<p>A person who may be an employee, outworker, apprentice, trainee, work experience student, volunteer and employer/PCBU who is an individual if they perform work for the business.</p>
<b>Independent contractor</b>	<p>A person who is not directly employed under a contract of employment or training by the principal employer at a workplace but engaged to provide services in return for a fee.</p>
<b>Principal contractor</b>	<p>In cases in which the cost of a construction project is \$350,000 or more, the owner is the principal contractor of the workplace where the construction project is to be carried out unless the owner appoints a principal contractor for the construction work and authorises the principal contractor control the workplace to the extent necessary to discharge the duties required of the principal contractor.</p>
<b>Designated Work Group (DWG)</b>	<p>A group of employees who share similar workplace health and safety concerns and conditions.</p>
<b>Health and Safety Representative (HSR)</b>	<p>A health and safety representative for a DWG who has been elected and holds office in accordance with Part 7 of the OHS Act.</p>
<b>Workplace</b>	<p>A place where a paid worker/employee and or self-employed person goes, or is likely to be, to carry out work for a business or undertaking.</p>

Term	Meaning
<b>Due diligence</b>	Applied to occupational health and safety, 'due diligence' means that employers shall take all reasonable precautions, under the particular circumstances, to prevent injuries or incidents in the workplace.
<b>Reasonably practicable</b>	<p>In relation to a duty to ensure health and safety 'reasonably practicable' means that which is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the likelihood of the hazard or risk concerned eventuating;</li> <li>(b) the degree of harm that would result if the hazard or risk eventuated;</li> <li>(c) what the person concerned knows, or ought to reasonably know, about the hazard or risk and any ways of eliminating or reducing the hazard or risk;</li> <li>(d) the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or reduce the hazard or risk;</li> <li>(e) the cost of eliminating or reducing the hazard or risk.</li> </ul> <p>This does not mean that if the cost of eliminating or fixing something is very high, then it does not need to be done.</p>
<b>Reasonable care</b>	<p>In relation to the standard of care that workers, including volunteers, must meet, 'reasonable care' means doing what a reasonable person would do in the circumstances having regard to factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the person's knowledge;</li> <li>• the person's role;</li> <li>• the person's skills and the resources available to them;</li> <li>• the person's qualifications;</li> <li>• the information the person has, and;</li> <li>• the consequences to health and safety of a failure for them to act in the circumstances.</li> </ul>



### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

[OHS Policy](#)

[OHS/WHS Plan](#)

[OHS/WHS Activities Calendar](#)

[www.victas.uca.org.au/who-we-are](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/who-we-are)

[Uniting Church in Australia Constitution and Regulations \(2018 Edition\)](#)

**Other**

[Victorian Occupational Health and Safety \(OHS\) Act 2004](#)

[Tasmanian Work Health and Safety \(WHS\) Act 2012](#)

## 2. Workplace induction

### 2.1 Employees and volunteers

This manual is a key resource in the induction process for new staff and volunteers. It covers all the aspects of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)/Work Health and Safety (WHS) that staff and volunteers need to know. This section focuses on the fundamental information newcomers need to know on day one.

Before commencing duties, all employees and volunteers must complete an induction to the workplace. Compliance with the information provided in this induction is the responsibility of staff and especially managers/supervisors/Church leaders.

As part of the induction, all employees and volunteers should be introduced to this manual. They should either be provided with their own copy or shown where they can access it for further reference. They will benefit from reading it. In particular, they should be advised to read the sections that relate to the duties and tasks outlined in their position description. At the very least the manager/supervisor/Church leader must go through and complete the *Safety Induction Checklist (Employees, Volunteers and Sole Traders)* with the worker.

Both the *UCA Health and Safety Manual* and the *Safety Induction Checklist (Employees, Volunteers and Sole Traders)* can be accessed as a pdf on the Synod website.

Note that when an employee or volunteer is undertaking training about a work process, e.g. undergoing the safety induction process, using an item of equipment, etc., it is recommended to record the person's attendance on a *Training Plan and Record Form*.

### 2.2 Sole traders

Supporting Church activities through the engagement of sole-trader contractors is common. Outreach programs, community and family engagement, special programs, music, building and garden maintenance may be resourced by hiring sole traders.



For further information and support, Synod People and Culture may assist with induction information.

e: [People&Culture@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:People&Culture@victas.uca.org.au)

## 2.3 Safety Induction Checklist (Employees, Volunteers and Sole Traders)

This checklist is a tool for use by the manager/supervisor/Church leader when inducting newcomers to the Church on the commencement of duties. A record of the induction should then be recorded in the workplace training register.

No.	Information and training for newcomers	Yes	No
1.	Have they received training to undertake their role?		
2.	Do they know who their supervisor is?		
3.	Have they received a position description?		
4.	Do they have the right equipment to perform their role?		
5.	Do they know the security procedures, access and exits in the building/s?		
6.	Do they know where the facilities, bathrooms and other amenities are?		
7.	Have they been shown the workplace noticeboard and read the key safety information there?		
8.	Have they been provided with the key OHS/WHS and UCA policies?		
9.	Are they informed of the emergency assembly areas and emergency response/evacuation procedures?		
10.	Do they know the names and contacts of key safety personnel (e.g. first aid officer, fire warden)?		
11.	Do they know the procedure in the event of an accident or injury?		
12.	Have they been shown the first aid kit, its location and who to contact if they need access to it?		
13.	Do they know how to report something unsafe, a hazard, or an incident?		
14.	Do they know how to complete an <i>Incident/Near Miss Report Form</i> and where to access the report form template?		
15.	Do they understand that they must take reasonable care for both their own and others' health and safety (both physical and psychosocial)?		
16.	Do they know how to use a ladder and/or trolley correctly?		
17.	Do they understand the importance of safety signage and following directions and complying with site safety signs?		
18.	Do they know the parking rules of the site?		
19.	Are they aware of the importance of cleaning up spills?		
20.	Are they informed about food handling safety?		
21.	Do they know not to consume drugs or alcohol prior to attending a UCA site?		
22.	Have they been provided with a copy of the UCA <i>Health and Safety Manual</i> OR shown where they can access it?		

As part of the induction, managers should impart the importance that the UCA places on the key areas described below.

## 2.4 Work-site safety

Workers and volunteers must be familiar with the place of work or volunteering. Op shops, for example, accommodate many volunteers and all must know the safety measures in place at the Op Shop in which they kindly offer their help.

It is everyone's responsibility to know critical safety information including exits, emergency procedures, location of first aid kits, response equipment and names of key safety personnel.

## 2.5 Safe workplace relationships

The Uniting Church is culturally diverse and inclusive. The Uniting Church welcomes all people, including those of different cultures, countries, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, and social demographics. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

We encourage all voices, gifts and graces. We gather together to contribute, fulfil purpose, be compassionate, just and life affirming in our interactions.

Inclusion also means, for example:

- improving physical access to a church or hall and/or special events and activities;
- providing assistance with access to information;
- re-designing of processes and systems to accommodate difference.

## 2.6 Conduct

Our conduct is very important. How we treat each other can make or break a relationship and can lead to a flourishing community or one distracted by upset and/or interpersonal conflict. It is also mandatory for workplaces to manage psychological health and prevent psychosocial hazards (such as workplace bullying, traumatic events, occupational violence and aggression, and physical and sexual assault).

In situations where staff, volunteers or contractors or others feel their psychological health is at risk they should report this to the person responsible for supervising their work. The responsible person must act to prevent psychological harm.

Many of us interact with the public. This can be in worship activities or hirer or rental arrangements with our properties. How we communicate sends a message to the wider community about the Uniting Church. How we treat each other builds the Church's reputation and appeal. We want people to feel safe and welcome.

We all have a legal and moral responsibility to treat each other fairly, respectfully and in alignment with Christian values.

## 2.7 Child safety

The Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania makes the following commitments:

- All children who are involved in any of the Uniting Church's activities, services, events or programs have a right to feel and be safe. The Uniting Church is committed to providing safe environments where children are cared for, respected, nurtured and sustained.
- We have zero tolerance of all forms of child abuse and will do all in our power to safeguard children from abuse.
- The Uniting Church commits itself to the creation and maintenance of a child-safe culture to ensure the care, protection and safety of all children engaging with the Uniting Church in any of its entities.
- Abuse thrives on secrecy. To prevent child abuse across the Uniting Church, we are committed to providing clear leadership and open and transparent governance to combat secrecy.
- The Uniting Church clearly affirms its commitment to upholding the law. This includes the requirement for all staff and volunteers to report abuse to the appropriate authority:
  - if you believe a child is in immediate danger, ring 000 and report the situation to the police. Try to keep the child safe in the meantime;
  - if a child is not in immediate danger but you have a concern about a person's conduct, contact the Culture of Safety Unit for advice and support to report your concern or fill out the online report form via the secure link provided on the UCA website (see below).
- Compliance guidelines, policies, training modules, resources, and information about how to report suspected misconduct are provided on the UCA website (see below).

All staff and volunteers are required to have a Working With Children Check.

Appointed leaders must undertake Uniting Child Safe training on a regular basis. To arrange training contact the Culture of Safety Unit.

Culture of Safety Unit contacts:

p: 9116 1434 e: [cultureofsafetycontact@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:cultureofsafetycontact@victas.uca.org.au)

website: [safechurch.ucavictas.org.au](http://safechurch.ucavictas.org.au)

## Management Actions

1. Ensure all employees, volunteers and sole traders have been guided through the *Safety Induction Checklist* on commencement of duties.
2. The induction of staff and volunteers has been recorded in a register noting date, actions and participant's name.
3. Encourage and facilitate workers to complete/refresh the induction on an annual basis.
4. Maintain a training plan and record for workers.



### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

[UCA Health and Safety Manual](#)

[Safety Induction Checklist \(Employees, Volunteers and Sole Traders\)](#)

[OHS Policy](#)

[Incident/Near Miss Report Form](#)

[Training Plan and Record Form](#)

[safechurch.ucavictas.org.au/policies-procedures](http://safechurch.ucavictas.org.au/policies-procedures)

[UCA Child Safe Policy VicTas](#)

## 2.8 Property contractors / consultants

Contractors and consultants who carry out property-related work need to manage their own safety and to ensure the work performed on a Church site does not put congregation members, visitors, staff, or anyone else at risk.

Such contractors include builders, consultants, tradespersons, building maintenance and handypersons, grounds maintenance people, and cleaners.

An online safety induction process for independent property contractors manages risk information such as insurance and licences on behalf of the Church.

Before arriving at a UCA property, all independent property contractors and consultants are required to be pre-qualified and inducted via the Online Safety Induction (See Management Actions point 1.). This induction must take place before undertaking any repairs, maintenance, minor works or other activity at the property. This process is for active Church property and not major projects where the builder has assumed responsibility for the whole property until the project is complete.

**Note:** To prepare for the Online Safety Induction, the contractor must already have their Working With Children Check (Victoria), industry or professional registration and/or licences and insurance. These must remain valid on check-in at Church property in order to proceed.

### Management Actions

#### Step one (prior to contractor/consultant arriving at premises)

1. Email your contractor or consultant company details (including an email address) to [contractorinduction@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:contractorinduction@victas.uca.org.au)
2. Display the poster with QR Code. Church councils will be supplied with a separate communication and a poster for printing. The poster will display the QR Code for contractor or consultant check-in. Emergency contact details are to be written on the poster and the poster to be placed in a prominent position.



Example of Contractor Sign-in poster  
(See also No.1 on the following page)

## **Step two** (when the contractor/consultant arrives on site)

Once the contractor or consultant has undertaken the induction, when they arrive at Church property, the process is straightforward. Local representatives need only to:

1. Ask contractors and their workers to scan the Linksafe QR code provided on the poster displayed at your premises (see example, above). The poster is available to download from the Synod website OHS Resources.
2. Check proof of induction (carried out before arrival, as described above) is displayed on the contractor's mobile phone (look for a green smiley face).
3. Contact Property Services ([contractorinduction@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:contractorinduction@victas.uca.org.au)) if the contractor or consultant cannot provide proof of induction.
4. Remind the contractor or consultant they cannot begin work until they have completed the induction.
5. Direct contractors and consultants to review the site plan for emergency arrangements.
6. Report any incident, even if no one is injured.
7. Remind contractors to isolate their work from all people by barriers or other separation.
8. Remind contractors to check the asbestos register before beginning any demolition, building or repair work.

For further assistance contact Property Services:

t: (03) 9116 1400 (UCA main switchboard) Ask for Property Administration

e: [property@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:property@victas.uca.org.au)

w: [victas.uca.org.au](http://victas.uca.org.au)



### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Contractor and Consultant Online Safety Induction  
Procedure (for property-related work)*

*QR Code Poster*

### 3. Job safety and training

It is important that risks are eliminated where possible or reduced to an acceptable level. The common OHS/WHS risks in a Church environment include those associated with its typical activities including worship gatherings, services, working bees, playgroups, fundraising activities, events, catering, hall set ups and outreach programs.

It is critical to ensure that job procedures are properly established, and all workers and volunteers are trained to perform the tasks they are assigned.

#### 3.1 Training

Before commencing duties, all employees and volunteers must be informed of UCA workplace policies and processes and receive appropriate training for the tasks they are undertaking.

All are required to read this *Health and Safety Manual* and be taken through the *Safety Induction Checklist (Employees, Volunteers and Sole Traders)* on page 11 by their manager/Church contact person/congregation leader.

For all employees and volunteers, training is key to reducing the risk of injury and harm. Therefore, training needs should be analysed and training refreshed regularly where appropriate. The *Training Needs Analysis Form* provides not only a means of tracking training needs of individuals but also of identifying training needs across the workplace, ensuring compliance with occupational health and safety requirements.

When a person undergoes training in a work process, using an item of equipment, etc. it is recommended to record their attendance on a *Training Plan and Record Form*. This also provides positive evidence in the event of an incident or inspection/audit.

The *Training Plan and Record Form* is a useful tool to capture the training and licences/certificates that the workers have completed and can be used to track outstanding training requirements.

#### Management Actions

1. Maintain a training record for workers (using the *Training Plan and Record Form*).
2. Regularly review training needs (using the *Training Needs Analysis Form*).



#### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Training Plan and Record Form*

*Training Needs Analysis Form*

### 3.2 Manual handling

There is no legal weight limit for manual handling. OHS/WHS legislation is based on a risk management approach where hazards are identified, assessed and controlled. If a manual handling task looks difficult, awkward or heavy, assess the task and develop controls to reduce the risk. Hazardous manual tasks are those where the worker must lift, lower, push, pull, carry, hold or restrain something.

#### Lifting and moving items

There are key measures that workers should take to minimise their risk of injury when lifting or moving items. They should:

- know their personal capacity to lift objects;
- avoid lifting items above their head and use equipment provided to avoid or reduce manual handling and awkward postures. For example, use a step ladder to get to the height they need to be;
- bend legs at the knees and keep the weight close to their centre of gravity when lifting;
- undertake training in the use of any equipment provided and follow relevant procedures;
- seek guidance from their supervisor before lifting heavy or bulky items.



#### Trolleys and lifting devices

Trolleys and lifting devices are recommended aids for moving heavy or bulky items or stacks (e.g. of chairs). When using such devices, there is still a risk of injury, however. It's important that users work methodically and do not rush. They should:

- follow the procedures/instructions for using the particular lifting or moving device;
- always push a trolley forward, and don't pull the trolley;
- position the trolley as close to the items as possible;
- use the foot brakes while loading, if the trolley has them;
- use a semi-squat position to load the items.

## Management Actions

1. Incorporate manual handling/training awareness into the induction program for all workers.
2. Provide equipment, such as trolleys (height-adjustable) and moving devices, to move heavy items over long distances.
3. Provide instructions about load weights and other relevant procedures.
4. Minimise weight of items purchased where possible.
5. Ensure nothing over 5 kg is stored above shoulder height.
6. Inspect and maintain equipment. Remove damaged equipment from service.



### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Manual Handling Task Risk Assessment Form*

*Hazard Report Form*

### Other

*WorkSafe Victoria – Manual handling 101: A guide for employers and workers in every industry*

*WorkSafe Victoria – Choosing and Using Trolleys*

## 3.3 General office work

Workers should be supported to manage the ergonomic hazards associated with the sitting and standing of sedentary office work.

It is recommended that workers:

- know how to adjust a sitting or standing desk to suit their physical requirements. The ideal position when using a keyboard, the arms should be at right angles at the elbow and the hands in a straight line with the forearms and the elbows close to the body;
- take breaks, stand up if they are able, and move away from the desk;

## Management Actions

1. Provide instruction and training on the safe use of workers' equipment.
2. Encourage workers to take breaks from the computer.
3. Ensure cabinets and shelves are not overloaded.
4. Ensure heavy items are accessible.



### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Workstation Risk Assessment Form*

### 3.4 Falls prevention

#### Height limits and ladder safety

*Working height limits for UCA staff and volunteers is two metres.*

*Works above two metres must be carried out by insured contractors who are experienced and qualified.*

Working on ladders is dangerous. Falls from heights can be fatal and/or cause serious injuries. It is important to promote awareness in the workplace that as we age, our sense of balance changes and Church councils must ensure that people over 65 are not at greater risk of injury and death due to falls.

To work at a height, you need fit-for-purpose equipment, maintenance practices, and pre-work inspections of equipment.

#### Platform step ladders and safety steps

Platform step ladders and safety steps should only be used for very light work of short duration and/or accessing storage areas where there is no danger of over-reaching. Ladders must be set up on a flat, firm surface clear of trip hazards.



#### Management Actions

1. Inform workers on induction of the two-metre working height limit.
2. Ensure fit-for-purpose equipment.



#### Online resources and references

*WorkSafe Victoria – Managing the Risk of Falls – Safe use of Ladders Video Clip*

*WorkSafe Tasmania – Managing the risk of falls at workplaces Code of Practice 2018*

### 3.5 Kitchen work

#### Food handling

A charity or non-profit community group that is selling or handling food is considered a food business under the *Victorian Food Act 1984* and *Tasmanian Food Act 2003*, and as such is required to meet food safety standards. This involves ensuring all food handled, sold or given away is safe and suitable for consumption and is compliant with the Food Acts and Food Standards Code.

Please note: Special local council licences may also be required for the sale of food at special functions, stalls, events, from vehicles or at large gatherings.

To meet food safety standards, a high level of cleanliness must be maintained in all areas where food is stored and prepared and these areas must be kept pest and animal free. Surfaces, equipment and storage spaces should be regularly checked and cleaned. Food handlers must also practise strict hand hygiene and take all reasonable measures not to compromise the safety and suitability of food, as set out in the Food Standards Code.

Safe storage of food also requires close monitoring of storage temperature and duration of storage. All stored food should be kept in sealed containers and clearly labelled with expiry dates. Food, crockery, glassware and cutlery should be stored separately from cleaning chemicals.

Note that a food business must permit an assistance animal in areas used by customers and may permit a dog that is not an assistance animal to be present in an outdoor dining area. All dogs must be kept on a leash.

It is recommended that all food handlers complete the Department of Health free online training program available at [DoFoodSafely](#) and that supervisors also consider doing the Food Handler Certificate.

#### Kitchen safety

To maximise the safety of workers in a kitchen area, the following preventative measures will help reduce the risk of injury:

- require employees and volunteers to wear appropriate footwear for the environment in which they are working;
- clean up spills immediately to minimise risks from oils, greases, detergents and foodstuffs. Cleaning of entire floors is best done after activities have finished;
- equip kitchen/wet areas with non-slip mats;
- maintain good housekeeping and regular inspections. Adequate storage and clear locations for materials, waste and equipment will keep the workplace clutter free, e.g. use of well-organised and signed shelving;
- ensure floors are in good condition without trip hazards;
- ensure suitable and well-maintained equipment;
- ensure a fire blanket and extinguisher are nearby, easily accessible and well-signed.

## Management Actions

1. Ensure workers are trained adequately to handle food in compliance with the Food Acts and Food Standards Code. It is recommended that all food handlers, including those preparing food for a community group or non-profit organisation complete the Victorian Department of Health free online training program available at [DoFoodSafely](#)
2. Consider having kitchen supervisors and food handlers undertake the Food Handler Certificate where appropriate.
3. Regularly complete the *Kitchen Safety Checklist* and ensure the kitchen space and procedures comply with it.
4. Liaise with local council to determine any special licensing requirements when food is to be sold.
5. Comply with allergen management requirements.



### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Kitchen Safety Checklist (for non-commercial events and gatherings)*

*Kitchen Cleaning and Sanitising Poster*

*Food Safety Rules Poster*

*Food Temperature Danger Zone Chart*

*Hand Hygiene for Food Handlers*

*Manual Handling Task Risk Assessment Form*

*Hazard Report Form*

### Other

*Food Act 1984 (Vic)*

*Food Act 2003 (Tas)*

*Food Regulations 2012 (Tas)*

*Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code 2003*

*Guide to Food Safety Standards, Chapter 3 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, 2016*

*Guide to Food Safety Standards, Information for Charities and Community Organisations, Australia New Zealand Food Standards*

*Vic Health Guide for community and not-for-profit groups*

*DHHS Tas – Guidelines for Mobile Food Businesses*

## 4. Property safety

The following information and advice refers to how to meet legal requirements in hazard management in Church buildings and properties.

### 4.1 Annual property maintenance inspection checklist

The Uniting Church in Australia Regulations require each presbytery committee to regularly inspect or arrange for the regular inspection of properties and equipment for which the presbytery and Church councils are responsible.

Regular inspection of a property and its equipment ensures the health, safety and wellbeing of all who use it. The *Annual Property Maintenance Inspection Checklist* (Appendix 1) is an invaluable tool to enable the management of this responsibility. It should not be confused with the *Essential Safety Measures* which relates to compliance of property with the *Victorian Government Building Regulations (2018)*.

The comprehensive checklist covers all the areas of accountability in relation to the safety of people using Church property and equipment. The list of items to check and ensure they are up to date includes policies, registers, training, audits, inspections, maintenance, hazardous materials management, first aid and emergency provisions, insurance and security, child safety provisions, and disability action.

Workplace accidents can be largely avoided by raising awareness and setting up formal prevention practices, some of which are required by law. If you fail to regularly inspect your property you will not have current information about any risks to be addressed, related to, for example, chemical storage, signage, flooring, mats and carpets, equipment storage, building conditions, tool safety, traffic access and exits, uneven ground, pedestrian access, unkept vegetation, lighting and pathways.

#### Management Actions

1. Create an annual schedule for checking each of the points on the checklist.
2. Once the checklist is completed and the accompanying documentation gathered, supply a copy to your presbytery office. Retain the original completed checklist with your congregation's own property records.
3. Take appropriate steps to ensure that each item on the checklist complies with required standards.



#### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Annual Property Maintenance Inspection Checklist*

## 4.2 Slips, trips (incl. site access) and falls

Slips, trips and falls at ground/same level are common. Taking the following preventative measures will help to reduce the risk of same-level falls.

### Management Actions

1. Ensure adequate external lighting, in particular for access and egress; marked walkways for pedestrians and rails where appropriate; regular cleaning of paths and driveways to assist grip on the surface.
2. Require employees and volunteers to wear appropriate footwear for the environment in which they are working.
3. Ensure that pets are kept on a leash or in a crate and not free to roam.
4. Clean up spills immediately to minimise risks from oils, greases, detergents and foodstuffs. Cleaning of entire floors is best performed after activities have finished.
5. Keep floor surfaces consistent wherever possible, as slips often occur due to changes in levels of friction/traction, for example, from a carpeted area onto a tiled floor. If this isn't possible, identify changes with tactile dots, colour changes or signage.
6. Equip kitchen/wet areas with non-slip mats.
7. Keep electrical leads out of walkways and access points.
8. Maintain good housekeeping and regular inspections. Adequate storage and clear locations for materials, waste and equipment will keep the workplace clutter free, e.g. use of well-organised and signed shelving.



### Online resources and references

*WorkSafe Victoria – Preventing slips, trips and falls: A health and safety solution*



### 4.3 Electrical equipment and systems

Regular checking and maintaining of electrical equipment and systems in your buildings is vital for the safety of the property and its users.

Safe practices in relation to electrical equipment must likewise be imparted and promoted to staff and volunteers.

#### Safe Practices for Staff and Volunteers

1. Engage only licensed electrical contractors to undertake electrical work or electrical equipment modifications.
2. Avoid or minimise the use of extension cords and ensure they carry the regulatory compliance mark (RCM):  Protect cords from damage, and keep away from water and walkways.
3. Use power boards, not double adaptors. Limit power board use to one per outlet.
4. Use power boards that are surge protected, carry the RCM and, preferably, with individual switches for each point
5. Ensure power boards and extension leads are in good condition (not frayed or with wires exposed).
6. Ensure holiday decorations, lighting, and displays do not cause fire hazards when in use or storage.
7. Use power plugs with insulated pins in high-risk areas (i.e. areas used by children).
8. Ensure all appliances are tagged stating the date put into service and tested, and that this is recorded in the Electrical Equipment Register.
9. Ensure appliances are well-maintained and operating correctly (e.g. microwaves).
10. Keep all light fittings, switches and power points clean and in good repair (i.e. not cracked, loose or improperly fixed to walls).
11. Immediately report any minor shocks or 'tingles' from electrical equipment or electrical infrastructure to a Church Contact Person/Congregation Leader and also advise Synod Safety Officer.
12. Immediately remove from service and tag out unsafe/faulty equipment.
13. Inspect, test and tag electrical equipment which is loaned/hired out as per the frequency required by AS/NZS 3760. A visual inspection prior to loan/hire should be done and recorded on the Electrical Equipment Register.
14. Be aware of underground and overhead electrical lines.

## Management Actions

### Building set-up

1. Ensure there is a safety switch or residual current device (RCD) installed for every building. Where possible this is to be fitted to the main electrical distribution board in order to provide protection to all power outlets.
2. Install outlet covers in areas accessed by children.

### Testing

1. Every 6 months: test the electrical switchboard (i.e. residual current device (RCD) – do a Push Button Test – and record the test date on the Safety Switch Test Record.
2. Annually: employ a licensed electrician or qualified test and tag technician to perform an Operating Time and Current Test check (i.e. check the safety switch time tripping) on the switchboard and any mobile residual current devices (RCDs) as required under AS/NZS 3760. A certificate of compliance should be supplied.
3. Annually: engage a suitably qualified person (test and tag technician) to test and tag all electrical equipment with a power lead.

### Registers

1. Maintain the Electrical Equipment Register by having it filled in by a licensed electrician at the time of testing the equipment.
2. Ensure the required 6-monthly and annual safety switch testing is implemented according to the schedule and guide of your Safety Switch Test Record.

### Online resources and references



[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Electrical Equipment Register*

*Testing and Inspection Intervals for Electrical Equipment*

*Safety Switch Test Record Register*

### Other

*WorkSafe Victoria – Electrical Safety*

*Safe Work Australia: Managing Electrical Risks in the Workplace: Code of Practice*

*Electricity Safety Act 1998 (Vic)*

*Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019 (Vic)*

## 4.4 Hazardous chemicals

Hazardous chemicals are substances, mixtures and articles that can pose a significant risk to health and safety if not managed correctly. They may have the potential to cause adverse health conditions or pose more immediate physical injury hazards or both.

Under OHS/WHS legislation, if you store any hazardous chemicals at your congregation that may pose a hazard to human health or a fire/explosion risk, you must legally comply as follows:

1. Provide current Safety Data Sheets (SDS)\* for all hazardous chemicals. 'Current' means the document has been issued by the supplier in the last five years.
2. Ensure that sufficient information about the safe use, handling and storage of the chemical is accessible to workers and emergency workers.
3. Ensure all items are labelled in accordance with their contents.
4. Avoid placing substances into other containers (decanting). If decanting cannot be avoided and the contents of the container are not immediately used, a label must be affixed to reflect the same information as the original container.

**\*Note:** A Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is a document that provides health and safety information about products, substances or chemicals that are classified as hazardous substances or dangerous goods. If you buy one of these products, it should come with an SDS.

An SDS tells you:

- the product (its name, ingredients and properties);
- who manufactured or imported it;
- how the product can affect your health;
- how to use and store it safely;
- first aid, spill containment and emergency response measures.

To classify, record and label hazardous chemicals, the conventions of the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) are used. The GHS is a system used to classify and communicate chemical hazards using internationally consistent terms and information on chemical labels and Safety Data Sheets.

The GHS provides criteria for the classification of physical hazards (e.g. flammable liquids), health hazards (e.g. carcinogens) and environmental hazards (e.g. aquatic toxicity). The GHS uses 'Danger' and 'Warning' as signal words to indicate the relative level of severity of a hazard. 'Danger' is used for more severe or significant hazards, while 'Warning' is used for the less severe hazards. Refer to *Chemical Labelling GHS-ADG Quick Guide*.

## Management Actions

1. Establish and maintain a chemical register. The register must include (a) a list of hazardous chemicals used, handled or stored; and (b) the current safety data sheet for each hazardous chemical listed.
2. Obtain, for each substance, an SDS from the manufacturer, supplier or importer. This may be either downloaded from their website or a copy requested.
3. Update the SDS for all hazardous chemicals every 5 years.
4. Complete a *Hazardous Chemical Risk Assessment* every 5 years for substances in continuous use. Complete an assessment prior to introducing new substances.
5. Ensure all hazardous chemicals are stored in a locked and/or secured location against unauthorised access i.e. that children and the public cannot readily access.
6. Store away from food and drinks in a well-ventilated area and in accordance with the SDS.
7. Provide personal protective equipment (PPE), as stated on the SDS to workers.
8. Provide training to workers re: use, storage, transportation, spill containment, first aid, emergency response and disposal requirements.
9. Aim to replace hazardous chemicals with low toxicity and environmentally friendly products.
10. Minimise quantities of hazardous chemicals held at any one time.
11. Provide a spill containment system, if necessary, e.g. bunding for corrosives, absorbents, portable bunds to prevent entry into drains.
12. Provide firefighting equipment.
13. Control ignition in the vicinity, if applicable.



### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Chemical Register*

*Hazardous Chemical Risk Assessment Form*

*Chemical Labelling GHS-ADG Quick Guide*



## Online resources and references (continued)

### Other

*WorkSafe Victoria – A step-by-step guide for Managing Chemicals in the Workplace*

*WorkSafe Victoria – Hazardous Substances Compliance Code*

*WorkSafe Victoria – Code of practice for storage and handling of dangerous goods*

*Safe Work Australia – Managing risks of hazardous chemicals in the workplace Code of Practice*

*Safe Work Australia – Labelling of workplace hazardous chemicals Code of Practice*

## 4.5 Asbestos and asbestos-containing materials (ACM)

Due to their age, Church buildings may have asbestos-containing material (ACM) and therefore an *ACM Register* (also referred to as an *ACM Log and Asbestos Register*) is required to specify the presence and location of such material.

All Church property, including commercially tenanted property, built prior to 2004 must hold a current *ACM Register*. An inspection and assessment of the asbestos-containing materials must be undertaken by a competent person every five years to ensure it is kept up to date. Any changes made in that five-year period must also be reflected on the *ACM Register*. As this inspection and assessment is a specific skill, contact the Synod Property Services Team for assistance and advice.

If no asbestos is found, the findings need to be documented, and a register provided that records the result as 'nil'. A 'nil' asbestos register does not need to be reviewed again.

Anybody (workers, contractors) undertaking work on buildings that contain ACM must be shown the *ACM Register*.

Removal of any asbestos must be undertaken only by a licensed asbestos removalist.

### Management Actions

1. Ascertain requirement for ACM assessment, initial and/or five-yearly review.
2. Retain original asbestos documentation (e.g. church council records, asbestos registers and management plan) and continue ongoing asbestos management activities in accordance with the legislation.
3. Provide copies of asbestos documentation to the presbytery property committee and Synod OHS.
4. Ensure location of all asbestos or ACM is clearly labelled.
5. Ensure *ACM Register* is available for all persons undertaking work.
6. Include asbestos as an induction topic for all workers.

7. Ensure a member of the property committee reviews the condition of ACM-identified areas every 12 months as a minimum. (The purpose of this inspection is to ensure that no significant damage or deterioration has occurred. If this has occurred, then the product is to be removed in accordance with the relevant codes of practice and guidelines.)
8. Include in the visual inspection an assessment of the labelling to ensure all labels are visible, securely affixed and in good condition.
9. Any activities that require the removal of any asbestos must be undertaken only by a licensed asbestos removalist.
10. Contact Synod OHS and Insurance Services for incidents involving potential asbestos exposure to workers (including volunteers), contractors, congregation members or visitors.



#### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Asbestos-Containing Materials Log*

*How to Manage Asbestos*

*Other*

*WorkSafe Victoria Service Provider Directory – Licensed Asbestos Removalists*

*WorkSafe Tasmania Service Provider Directory – Licensed Asbestos Removalists*

## 4.6 Lead-based paint

If a building was built in the 1980s or earlier, it is best to assume that it has been painted with lead-based paint. Lead-based paint can present a health risk if it has deteriorated, becoming powdery or flaky, or when sanding or buffing of lead-based paint produces lead dust. Exposure can occur through breathing in of airborne lead-containing dust or orally when hands have been contaminated and come into contact with the mouth via handling food and drink.

Due to the severity of health effects caused by exposure to lead, UCA staff and volunteers must not undertake any work that exposes them to lead. If it is necessary to disturb surfaces with paint containing lead, it is recommended that an insured contractor with lead paint management training do the job.

### Management Actions

1. Notify Synod OHS of any potential lead exposure to workers (including volunteers), contractors, congregation members or visitors (via an *Incident/Near Miss Report Form*).

## 4.7 Equipment

### Equipment management and maintenance

All machinery, equipment and tools, both stationary and mobile, must be managed in terms of maintenance, training of those who operate it, and how or where it is used.



#### Management Actions

1. Keep an *Equipment Maintenance Schedule Register*.
2. Provide/display Safe Operating Procedures for the machinery, e.g. ride on mower, chair stacking trolley.
3. Ensure required personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided to the operator.
4. Document training provided to operators.



#### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Equipment Maintenance Schedule Register*

### Equipment purchase and acquisition

Some equipment can pose risks to the workers who use it, for example because of the weight or size of the item or difficulty of its set up or use. Risks associated with the purchase or acquisition of goods with OHS/WHS implications must be assessed prior to introducing the item into the workplace in accordance with the employer's obligations to minimise risk to workers. Key questions to consider before acquiring equipment include:

- Where will the item be located?
- What maintenance is required?
- What safety or other standards apply?
- Has the safest product available been considered?

#### Management Actions

1. Ensure due diligence when purchasing or acquiring equipment through hire, lease or donation, so that safety considerations are taken into account.
2. Use the *OHS/WHS Purchasing Checklist* to help make an assessment where the item raises any safety concerns or is novel in your workplace.



#### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*OHS/WHS Purchasing Checklist*

## 5. Safe events

### 5.1 Legal responsibility



The *Victorian OHS Act (2004)* and the *Tasmanian WHS Regulations (2012)* still apply when the Church conducts a public event. Public events may include working bees, garage sales, car boot sales, fetes, concerts, camps, fundraisers, conferences, childcare, etc.

As an event organiser, the Church needs to anticipate all reasonably foreseeable risks that patrons are likely to be exposed to and provide reasonably practicable control measures in response.

The Church is to ensure:

- the health and safety of participants, spectators and anyone else at that event;
- the work environment is without potential risks to health and safety;
- plant and structures are safe; and
- safe systems of work.

Workers and other persons such as patrons at public events conducted by the Church also have a duty of care to:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety;
- take reasonable care that they do not adversely affect the health and safety of others;
- comply with reasonable instructions given by the event organisers.

### 5.2 Risk assessment for events

Managing risks is an important component of your event planning.

To assist you in your assessment of risk, the *Event Safety Checklist* and *Working Bee Checklist* are guides to many of the issues that must be considered when planning an event and, depending on the nature of the event, some of these issues may require more detailed attention. Where such issues arise, it is recommended to perform a risk assessment (Refer to Appendix 2 at the end of this manual) for each issue.

The process described above is recommended in the planning of any high-risk event – even if the same or similar event has been held several times before. Likewise, if a new activity is introduced or the work environment changes significantly a risk assessment should be redone. Undertaking risk assessments of event activities can assist you to identify, assess and control risks relevant to that event.

Some controls may include:

- comprehensive hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control plans;
- adequate supervision;
- provision of information and signage;
- provision of barriers and/or restricting entry to certain areas of activity.

The *Hazard Report Form* and *General Risk Assessment Form* are tools also provided on the UCA website to assist managers to assess and manage risk.

## **Management Actions**

1. Prior to each high-risk congregation activity (e.g. fetes, working bees, garage sales, fundraisers), complete a checklist (*Event Safety Checklist* or *Working Bee Checklist*).
2. Table the above-mentioned completed checklist at your Church council meeting and discuss hazards and risks to (a) decide actions to eliminate or minimise risks to workers, public or property (Note: this may include conducting a risk assessment or hazard assessment); and (b) allocate responsibility for actions in an agreed timeframe.



### **Online resources and references**

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Event Safety Checklist*

*Working Bee Checklist*

*General Risk Assessment Form*

*Hazard Report Form*

### **Other**

*Food Standards Australia New Zealand – Guide to Food Safety Standards, Information for Charities and Community Organisations*

*Safe Work Australia – General Guide for Amusement Devices*

*WorkSafe Victoria – Event Management: Health and Safety Guides*

*Safe Work Australia – Traffic Management: Guide for Events*

## 6. First aid provisions

### 6.1 Legal responsibility

The provision of first aid facilities, equipment and an adequate number of staff trained in first aid is a legal requirement. The first aid provisions described below must be provided in all UCA workplaces.

The legal responsibility of the employer under the *Victorian OHS Act (2004)* is to provide adequate facilities for the welfare of workers. Compliance with this requires the provision of comprehensive first aid in the workplace.

### 6.2 First aid kit contents

A first aid kit should include equipment for providing basic first aid. The contents of a basic first aid kit can be found in the *First Aid Contents Checklist* template available on the UCA website. However, there may be additional needs where higher risk activities are performed. When working with children, their specific needs should also be considered.

*Remember to review your first aid requirements at least annually and when undertaking a new activity such as a working bee or youth camp.*



### 6.3 Location of first aid kit and AED/defibrillator

Anyone performing work for the UCA must have access to a first aid kit even when they are away from UCA premises. The location of the First Aid kit should be easily accessible. Likewise, if there is an AED/defibrillator in the workplace, it should be easily accessible and well-signed.

If a Church activity is performed offsite, ensure there is a first aid kit available. Keep first aid kits wherever there is a higher risk of injury or illness, such as the kitchen and in Church vehicles. You should also think about anyone who might work alone. Ensure that anyone working alone has the means to communicate and call for help.

When caring for children away from their parents, ensure there is always a first aid kit readily accessible to adults and trained first aiders with an approved first aid qualification relevant to children.



### 6.4 First aid kit appearance and signage

First aid kits can be of any size or shape, but each kit should be:

- immediately identifiable with a white cross on a green background;
- made of material that will protect the contents from dust, moisture and contamination.

Display first aid signs well so the kit is easy to find.

## 6.5 First aid officers and training

Each congregation should have trained first aid officers, particularly when higher risk activities are performed. Higher risk activities include (but are not limited to) commercial cooking, using a step ladder, the operation of power tools in a men's shed or children's ministry. First aid officers must gain the necessary skills and knowledge from a registered training organisation. The minimum level of training for first aid officers is HLTAID011 (also known as Level 2 or Senior First Aid) including CPR training. First aid officers must renew their qualifications every three years, and it is strongly recommended they undertake the CPR component every 12 months.

Where children are in UCA care for an extended period of time or their parents are not on site, there are additional requirements. There must be a first aid officer on site with an approved first aid qualification relevant to children.

## 6.6 Maintaining the first aid kit and AED/defibrillator

A person in the workplace (often the first aid officer) should be nominated to maintain the first aid kit and the AED/defibrillator if the workplace has one. The nominated person should:

- monitor usage of the first aid kit and ensure items used are replaced as soon as practicable after use;
- maintain an inventory list, as per the *First Aid Kit Contents Checklist*;
- if the first aid kit is not used (at least quarterly), check to ensure it contains a complete set of the required items. You should also check they are in working order and within the expiry date;
- consider putting a sticker on the door or lid of the first aid kits as evidence as to when they were last checked, and by whom.
- where relevant, check that the AED/defibrillator and pads are in working order.

## 6.7 Completing a first aid record

Congregations must keep a record of all first aid treatments provided. First aid treatment should be recorded on the *Incident / Near Miss Report Register*. (For further information, see 9. Incident and Injury Management in this manual.)

When children are in our care and away from their parent(s)/guardian(s), there are additional requirements. In addition to completing the *Incident / Near Miss Register*, the nature and circumstances of the incident must be recorded on the *Incident / Near Miss Form*, and parent(s)/guardian(s) must also be notified of the incident, injury, trauma or illness immediately or as soon as is reasonably practicable.

## Management Actions

1. Determine what is required in your first aid kit.
2. Keep a first aid inventory (*First Aid Kit Contents Checklist*) in your first aid kit.
3. Nominate someone to maintain the first aid kit according to the *First Aid Kit Contents Checklist*.
4. Nominate someone to regularly (monthly) check that the AED/defibrillator battery and pads are in working order and maintain a record of the checks.
5. Determine your first aid arrangements in consultation with workers.
6. Ensure your first aid officers have completed training from a registered training organisation.
7. Document your first aid arrangements and make them available to all workers.
8. Keep a record of when first aid was administered on the *Incident / Near Miss Register*.
9. Review your first aid arrangements annually or when you undertake a new activity.



### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*First Aid Kit Contents Checklist*

*First Aid Officer Poster Template*

*AED Location Poster Template*

*First Aid Kit Location Poster Template*

*Incident / Near Miss Register Template*

### Other

*WorkSafe Victoria – First Aid in the workplace Compliance code*

*Safe Work Australia – First Aid in the workplace Code of practice*

## 7. Emergency management planning

### 7.1 Legal responsibility

The legal responsibility of the employer under the *Victorian OHS Act (2004)* is to eliminate or reduce risks to the health and safety of employees at the workplace. The *Tasmanian WHS Regulations (2012)* specify that the employer has a duty to prepare, maintain and implement an emergency management plan. Accordingly, all Church work environments and areas conducting public activities, e.g. church halls, are required to have an emergency plan.

### 7.2 Emergency management and evacuation plan

The emergency management and evacuation plan must be a written document detailing how a congregation will deal with or manage an emergency across all areas of its location. The UCA has developed such a plan, the *Emergency Procedures Flip Book*, for use in all Church workplaces. It allows for the individual workplace to fill in their own local emergency contact details. Procedures are detailed in case of the following emergencies: fire, evacuation, medical emergency, internal building emergency, external building emergency, bomb or substance threat, and personal threat.



In addition to this plan, an emergency evacuation diagram must be developed and displayed in key locations in the workplace, and any person who has a disability who would require special assistance during an evacuation procedure must have a tailored personal emergency evacuation plan completed by their manager.

#### Management Actions

1. Display the *Emergency Procedures Flip Book* with up-to-date local emergency contacts and any extra local emergency arrangements.
2. Include the emergency procedures information, training and instruction in the employee and volunteer induction process and ensure this information is provided within two days of the person commencing work in the building.
3. Implement an annual evacuation drill and assessment of the fire evacuation and emergency management plan.
4. Create and display an emergency evacuation diagram. The diagram should be at A3 size and displayed in a visible location that is oriented to show the actual direction to the exit. It must not be placed at the actual exit.
5. Complete the *Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan* for those who would require special assistance during an evacuation procedure.
6. Ensure the building is compliant with legislated emergency requirements by maintaining all *Essential Safety Measures (ESMs)*.
7. Maintain the building and equipment by completing the *Annual Property Maintenance Inspection Checklist*.



#### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Emergency Procedures Flip Book*

*Annual Evacuation and Assessment Form*

*Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (Template)*

*Emergency Contacts (Poster) Template*

### 7.3 Fire warden training and emergency evacuation exercises

As part of the emergency procedures, an emergency/fire warden should be appointed to carry out specific tasks while the evacuation is taking place. This role is to ensure the safe evacuation of all people in the event of an emergency.

The name and contact number of the emergency warden should be clearly displayed in the building.

The emergency/fire warden must be competent and provided with adequate training in order to provide an effective response to an emergency prior to the emergency services arriving. It is recommended that emergency/fire wardens participate in accredited fire warden training.

All workers need to have access to and training in a plan that clearly explains appropriate responses in case of an emergency, including the controlled movement of people from the workplace.

#### Management Actions

1. Appoint one or more emergency/fire warden(s) to ensure that your workplace is covered at all times when people are in attendance and provide the wardens with training (accredited where possible).
2. Display the Fire Wardens Poster with the contact details for the people designated as fire wardens in your workplace.



#### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Bomb/Substance and Phone Threat Checklist*

*Offender Identification Form*

*Fire Wardens (Poster Template)*

## 7.4 Bushfire safety

To ensure you are properly prepared for the fire season, we recommend you download and complete the CFA Bushfire Survival Guide and the CCI Surviving Bushfire Checklist from the Audit Risk and Insurance page on the Synod website.



### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/disaster-care](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/disaster-care)

*UCA Surviving Bushfire Checklist*

*CFA Bushfire Survival Guide*

## 7.5 Safety signs

A list of essential safety signs to be displayed clearly in the appropriate locations in relation to hazards and emergencies in the workplace is given below.

### Hazard warnings

Hazardous chemicals: location and contents

Site-specific hazard warnings

### Emergency information

First aid officer: name, work location and number

Fire warden: name, work location and number

OHS officer: name, work location and number

First aid kit location

Fire extinguisher/blanket location

Fire alarm location

AED/Defibrillator location

Emergency evacuation procedures (Flip Book)

Emergency contacts

### Safety guides

Exit signs

### Management Actions

1. Ensure relevant signage is displayed in appropriate locations and clearly visible to all building occupants and that contact details are kept up to date.



Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*First Aid Officer (Poster Template)*

*Fire Wardens (Poster Template)*

*OHS Contact Person (Poster Template)*

*First Aid Kit Location (Poster Template)*

*AED (Defibrillator) Location (Poster Template)*

*Emergency Evacuation Procedures (Flip Book)*

*Emergency Contacts (Poster Template)*

## 8. Incident and injury management

The reporting and management procedures described below must be followed in the case of a workplace incident or injury affecting staff, volunteers, or contractors in the course of their work, and/or members of the public affected by the carrying out of those work activities.

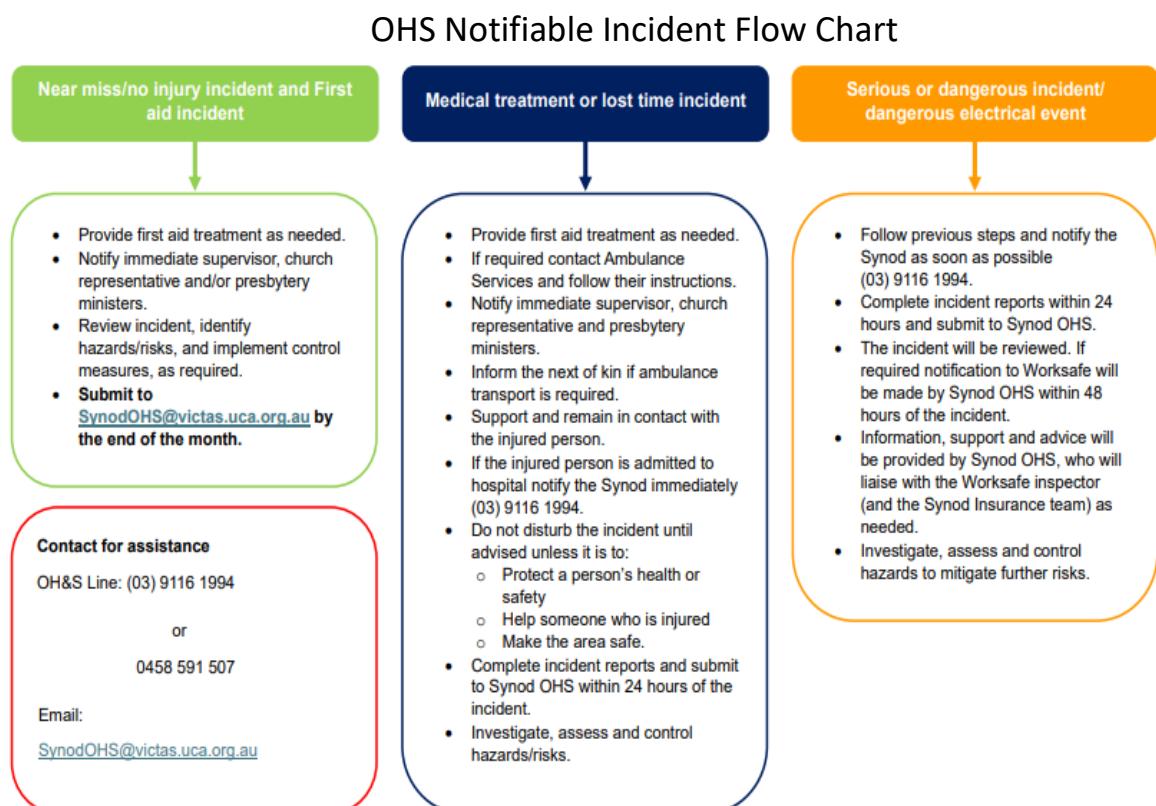
### 8.1 Incident definition

An incident is defined as 'an event that has led to or could have led to an injury, illness or damage'. **The damage may be physical or psychological.** Incidents include near misses, injuries, property damage, and environmental events.

### 8.2 Incident reporting and investigation

#### 1. Incident management

- Report to Synod all incidents occurring to people (workers, volunteers, contractors or members of the public) at work or as a consequence of work activities, and incidents affecting Church property/assets. Follow the procedures as outlined in the flow chart below, which can also be downloaded from the UCA website.



- b) Investigate incidents so that we can identify all actions required to prevent recurrence of such events. Identify all factors contributing to a reported incident, irrespective of the outcome. This information will assist you to implement rectification and/or improvements that may be required to maintain a safe environment for all parties.
- c) Maintain the incident register as a working document so that the congregation can track the progress of various incidents and provide summary information to the Presbytery and the Synod.

It is expected that this document be reviewed as part of Church Council meeting agendas.

## **2. Immediate reporting of notifiable incidents (via Synod)**

The Victorian and Tasmanian OHS/WHS legislation sets out what type of incidents are notifiable to the regulator. There are nine that must be reported to the regulator, either WorkSafe Victoria or WorkSafe Tasmania, immediately the employer (in this case, the Synod) becomes aware that a notifiable incident has occurred.

These incidents include death, serious injury or serious illness, and dangerous incidents at a workplace, in particular incidents that result in hospital admission. (Refer to the resources list below for a full list.)

Synod OHS will make the notification to the regulator.

## **3. Electric shock**

All electric shocks in workplaces must be reported under Victorian and Tasmanian law. If in doubt, report the incident to Synod anyway. Reportable electrical incidents are referred to as 'dangerous incidents' under OHS/WHS laws and 'serious electrical incidents' under electrical safety laws.

A 'serious electrical incident' includes that which results in a fatality or an electric shock or injury that needs to be treated by a doctor.

A 'dangerous incident' is one which involves workers being exposed to serious risks from immediate or imminent exposure to electric shock. A common example of this is where a worker receives an electric shock while unplugging electrical equipment and removing a plug from a socket.

Refer to the links in the resources list below for descriptions of the types of notifiable incidents.

#### 4. Notifiable incident site

Where a notifiable **physical** incident has occurred, the incident scenes must not be disturbed until an inspector arrives at the site, or any earlier time that the inspector directs.

However, incident scenes can be disturbed if necessary to:

- protect a person's health or safety;
- help someone who is injured;
- make the area safe or reduce the risk of a further notifiable incident happening;
- assist with an associated police investigation.

#### Management Actions

1. Following the steps in the above flow chart, report incident promptly and complete the *Incident/Near Miss Report Form – Part 1*.
2. Secure the site of a notifiable incident where feasible (as in point 4 above).
3. Investigate incident to identify actions to take to avoid a recurrence and complete the *Incident / Near Miss Report Investigation Form – Part 2*.



#### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*OHS Notifiable Incident Flow Chart*

*Incident / Near Miss Report Form – Part 1*

*Incident / Near Miss Report Investigation Form – Part 2*

*Incident / Near Miss Register Template*

**Other**

*WorkSafe Victoria – criteria for notifiable incidents*

*WorkSafe Tasmania - criteria for notifiable incidents*

### 8.3 Workers' compensation claims

Employees who sustain a workplace injury or illness arising out of or in the course of employment may be eligible for workers' compensation in Victoria and Tasmania.

Employees need to complete a workers' compensation claim form and forward it to Synod OHS at [SynodOHS@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:SynodOHS@victas.uca.org.au) or call (03) 9116 1994 / 0458 591 507 **within 24 hours** of the incident occurring.

If medical treatment is required, a WorkCover Certificate of Capacity (Victoria) or Workers' Compensation Medical Certificate (Tasmania) needs to be provided.

Compensation can be claimed by the worker if the injury or illness results in time off work and/or medical, hospital or rehabilitation services. Claims are reviewed

and investigated by the regulator (WorkSafe) who determines the claim liability, acceptance or rejection.

## 8.4 Rehabilitation and return to work

A return to work from injury or illness may be accomplished in stages.

Rehabilitation is the process of returning an injured or ill person to work within medical guidelines. A return to suitable duties and responsibilities at the earliest possible time is encouraged and is legislated.

The Synod People and Culture team [SynodOHS@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:SynodOHS@victas.uca.org.au) will support the compensation and return-to-work processes.

### Management Actions

4. Ensure noticeboards display workers' rehabilitation and compensation information and that volunteers, ministers and employees are aware of this noticeboard and its contents.
5. Maintain strict confidentiality in relation to all medical information.
6. Contact Synod OHS for assistance.



### Online resources and references

*Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 (Vic)*

*Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2014 (Vic)*

*Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Tas)*

*Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2011 (Tas)*

## Appendix 1: Annual property maintenance inspection checklist

Church properties must be maintained in a good and safe condition in order to meet the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) and Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (Tas)* and to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all people associated with the Church.

*The Uniting Church in Australia Regulations* require a Presbytery Property Committee to regularly inspect or arrange for the regular inspection of properties for which the presbytery and church councils are responsible, and to ensure that such properties are maintained. The church council is responsible for the management and administration of all congregational property, including its care and maintenance and measures as necessary or appropriate for its use and management.

Presbytery:	
Congregation:	
Address:	
Date inspected:	
Inspected by:	
Contact phone:	

### General information / documentation

Questions	Yes	No	Additional comments
1. Do you have an Occupational Health and Safety / Work Health and Safety Policy Statement displayed?			
2. Do you have an Asbestos Register? (Please attach a copy.)			
3. If asbestos is registered, is the location of all asbestos labelled?			
4. Does a member of the property committee review the condition of areas identified in the asbestos audit annually?			
5. Has your Congregation adopted Child Safe Policies of the Uniting Church in Australia and signed the UCA Child Safe Statement of Commitment? Date Adopted? (e.g. date of Church Council meeting/Congregation meeting.)			
6. Is a copy of the UCA VicTas Child Safe Policy readily available to all members and visitors including parents?			
7. When was Safe Church training last provided to your lay leaders?			
8. Is your WWCC database updated regularly? (Your church's WWCC database should be updated at least annually and when leadership volunteers and workers join / leave.)			
9. Do you have an Essential Safety Measures Schedule? (Please attach the Annual Essential Safety Measures (ESM) Report for the previous year.)			

## Building environment – internal / external

Questions	Yes	No	Additional comments
10. Is plant life impeding safe entry or exit from the property by vehicles or pedestrians?			
11. Are car parks and footpaths lit during night meetings, including for non-church users of the property?			
12. Is there security lighting in place and are there lights on throughout the night? Include details about the type of lighting in the additional comments field.			
13. Are paths and/or walkways free from trip hazards, including unlevel surfaces and other obstacles?			
14. Are any windows cracked or broken?			
15. Is 'grade A' safety glass installed in all public areas subject to factors such as wind and human impact? <i>a. Any decorative windows must be protected with Perspex or Mesh to avoid any shattering or dislodgement of glazing.</i> <i>b. All clear glazed panes that are less than 2 metres in height must have decals for visual warning.</i>			
16. Do all doors and windows open easily and shut completely? Are they fitted with locks? Are the locks functional?			
17. Are floor surfaces, carpets or mats in good condition with no loose or worn material?			
18. Are floor surfaces even, level and free from trip and slip hazards?			
19. Are internal/external steps and staircases in good condition and fitted with anti-slip tread and nosing?			
20. Are handrails or balustrades installed where required (i.e. on stairs or balconies with a fall of more than one metre)?			
21. Are all aisles, exits and access ways clear of obstructions?			
22. Do you have adequate storage in all areas, so that floorspace is clear and shelves are not overloaded?			
23. Are all electrical cords kept in a safe manner (i.e. clear of all aisles, exits and access ways, not dangling loosely from raised surfaces)?			
24. Are ceilings and walls in good repair (no water leakage, flaking paint, mould or mildew etc.)?			
25. Have gutters been cleaned in the past six months and downpipes unblocked free to discharge water into the storm water drains?			
26. Have drainage pits in carparks and other external areas been cleared of debris to protect against flood or backflow?			
27. Are building materials, timber pallets, cardboard, loose boards, bricks or tiles stored anywhere on the property?			
28. Are rubbish bins stored inside the buildings or secured away from the buildings?			
29. Are pest control arrangements in place?			
30. Do you have all the recommended safety signage, i.e. hazard warnings, exit signs, emergency information?			

## Electrical

Questions	Yes	No	Additional comments
31. Is a residual current device (RCD) or safety switch installed for every building?			
32. Have the RCDs been tested in the past six months?			
33. Have there been any alternative energy systems (solar, wind, etc.) installed at your property?			
34. Are all light fittings, switches and power points clean and in good repair (i.e. not cracked, loose, or improperly fixed to walls)?			
35. Are power boards used instead of household double adaptors?			
36. If power boards are in use, are they limited to one board per outlet?			
37. Are all power boards and extension leads in good condition (not frayed or wires exposed)?			
38. Has all portable electrical equipment been inspected, tested and tagged by a qualified electrical worker? Date of last test? (Frequency as per AS/NZS 3760)			
39. Are appliances well-maintained and operating correctly (fridges, microwaves etc.)?			

## Ventilation and amenities

Questions	Yes	No	Additional comments
40. Has the building been upgraded for mechanical fresh air/ventilation or does it have sufficient natural ventilation?			
41. If the property is air-conditioned, are filters and vents regularly cleaned and systems maintained by a qualified technician? You should aim to have your heating and cooling system serviced at least once every year.			
42. Have the cooking amenity exhaust range hoods and/or other exhaust vents been cleaned and serviced at least twice a year?			
43. Are property amenities (i.e. kitchen, toilets and showers) hygienically cleaned?			
44. Is all furniture in good stable condition (chairs, pews etc.)?			

## First aid and emergency procedures

Questions	Yes	No	Additional comments
45. Do all emergency exit doors have illuminated signage above the door?			
46. Do all emergency exit doors have a single lever or push bar action to open?			
47. Are all emergency exit doors free of slide bolts, internal key locks, padlocks, etc.?			
48. Are all fire extinguishers and fire hoses easily accessible?			
49. Have extinguishers, hose reel hydrants and fire blankets been serviced in the past six months or in accordance with the Essential Safety Measures Schedule?			
50. Do you have emergency lighting in addition to illuminated exit signs to ensure a safe evacuation during an evening meeting?			
51. Have the signs and emergency lighting been tested, in accordance with the Essential Safety Measures Schedule?			
52. Are emergency and fire evacuation procedures clearly displayed?			
53. Is the emergency evacuation diagram in an A3 compliant standard and displayed in a visible location that is oriented to show the actual direction to exit? (N.B. It must not be placed at the actual exit.)			
54. Are leadership volunteers and workers trained in the evacuation procedures?			
55. Has a fire drill been conducted in the past year?			
56. Is there a first aid kit and is it accessible to all members?			
57. Do you have designated first aid officers and are their contact details kept with the first aid kits and displayed on your safety notice board?			
58. Are contents of the first aid kits appropriate for the property and its activities, and regularly checked and maintained? (Consider additional equipment in bushfire or flood zones.)			
59. Do you keep a register of injuries (an incident/near miss register)?			
60. Are first aid kits appropriately labelled? (i.e. marked with a white cross and green background).			
61. Are the current local emergency phone numbers clearly displayed at the first aid kit and on emergency procedures?			

## Insurance and security

Questions	Yes	No	Additional comments
62. Have there been any security issues during the year? If so, have they been resolved?			
63. Is there a security alarm installed? In the additional comments field, advise whether this is a local alarm or monitored by a security firm. CCTV?			
64. Are all Church computers and multimedia equipment secured?			
65. Are computer systems regularly backed up, and backups kept off-site?			
66. Has your key register been reviewed in the past 12 months (including access via electronic keypads)? In the additional comments field, advise how many people have keys to the property.			
67. Are keys and access rights subject to 'real time' control (that is, register is completed whenever keys / access rights are issued to new person or when keys are returned / access rights deactivated when keyholder leaves congregation/ employment)?			
68. Are the facilities regularly used by other church groups, agencies or the general community?			
69. Is there a current UCA-endorsed hire agreement in place with all groups who use the property?			
70. Do you have charity collection bins on your properties? Include details about how these are 'maintained' to prevent unauthorised access / dumping.			

## Child safety

Questions	Yes	No	Additional comments
71. Do children attend your church (worship services or community use of the buildings)?			
72. Has work been undertaken to make the building and amenities child safe?			
73. Are kitchen and cooking facilities inaccessible to children?			
74. Are electrical and gas appliances, particularly kitchen appliances and power tools, inaccessible to children?			
75. Are safety plugs used in all power points that are not being utilised?			
76. Are all sources of hot and boiling water inaccessible to children?			
77. Are all chemicals, fuels and hazardous substances securely stored?			
78. Are all hazardous substances and dangerous goods properly labelled and stored in accordance with the Safety Data Sheet (SDS)?			
79. If applicable, is the children's playground and equipment regularly maintained and free from hazards and debris?			

## Hazardous materials

Questions	Yes	No	Additional comments
80. Is there a register of Hazardous Substances and Dangerous Goods stored on-site?			
81. Do leadership volunteers and workers know where to obtain information for substance use, safe handling, emergency response, spillage, storage and disposal of chemicals?			
82. Are Safety Data Sheets available for all hazardous substances and dangerous goods in use at the property? Current (i.e. dated no more than 5 years ago)?			
83. Have assessments been undertaken for all hazardous substances and dangerous goods in use on site to ensure they are stored and used in accordance with the requirements?			

## Disability action plan

Questions	Yes	No	Additional comments
84. Is there equitable access into the facility (i.e. ramps, toilets, public meeting rooms)?			
85. Are compliant accessible Parking Spaces provided?			
86. Has a Hearing Loop been installed in the Worship space?			
87. If yes, is the extent of the Hearing Loop clearly indicated and an appropriate amplification system installed?			

## Additional comments

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Please retain the original completed checklist with your congregation's own property records and forward copies to your presbytery office.

## Appendix 2: Risk / Hazard assessment guide

In certain circumstances, particularly in conducting high-risk events (e.g. fetes and working bees), it may be necessary to consider and assess a potential risk or hazard and to determine whether it can be minimised or eliminated, or whether it poses too great a risk to workers and/or public.

### Definitions

The terms 'hazard' and 'risk' are fundamental to occupational/work health and safety. In this context, the following definitions apply:

**Hazard:** A situation or object where there is potential for harm, loss or damage to people, plant, property or the environment.

**Risk:** A measure of the likelihood of some adverse event occurring and the likely consequences of that event, e.g. injury, illness, and/or damage to people, plant, property or the environment.

### Steps in assessment

To undertake a risk or hazard assessment, the following steps should be followed using a risk rating matrix. It is recommended that a risk assessment be undertaken by at least two people.

Step 1: Identify the projected consequence of the situation or hazard.

Step 2: On the risk rating matrix (Table 1.1 below), select the level of seriousness of the consequence should it occur. (Refer to the Ratings definitions Table 1.2 below to understand the measurements.)

Step 3: On the risk rating matrix below, select the most realistic likelihood of the consequence occurring. (Refer to the Ratings definitions Table 1.3 below to understand the measurements.)

Step 4: On the risk rating matrix, see where the levels of **consequence** and **likelihood** you selected intersect. This is the risk rating. Document the risk rating.

Table 1.1 Risk rating matrix

Likelihood	Consequence					
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
	Almost certain	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High

Table 1.2 Ratings definitions

Likelihood		
Descriptor	Level	Definition
Almost certain	A	Will occur in most circumstances (greater than 90% chance of occurring)
Likely	B	Will probably occur in most circumstances ( 51 to 90% chance of occurring)
Possible	C	Might occur at some time (21 to 50% chance of occurring)
Unlikely	D	Could occur at some time (1 –to 20 % chance of occurring)
Rare	E	May happen only in exceptional circumstances when the activity is undertaken (less than 1% chance of occurring)

Table 1.3 Ratings definitions

Consequence		
Descriptor	Level	Definition
Severe	5	Fatality or permanent disability
Major	4	Lost time injury or illness
Moderate	3	Medical treatment injury or illness
Minor	2	First Aid injury or illness
Insignificant	1	Injury or illness not needing First Aid

## Steps in determining action (control measures)

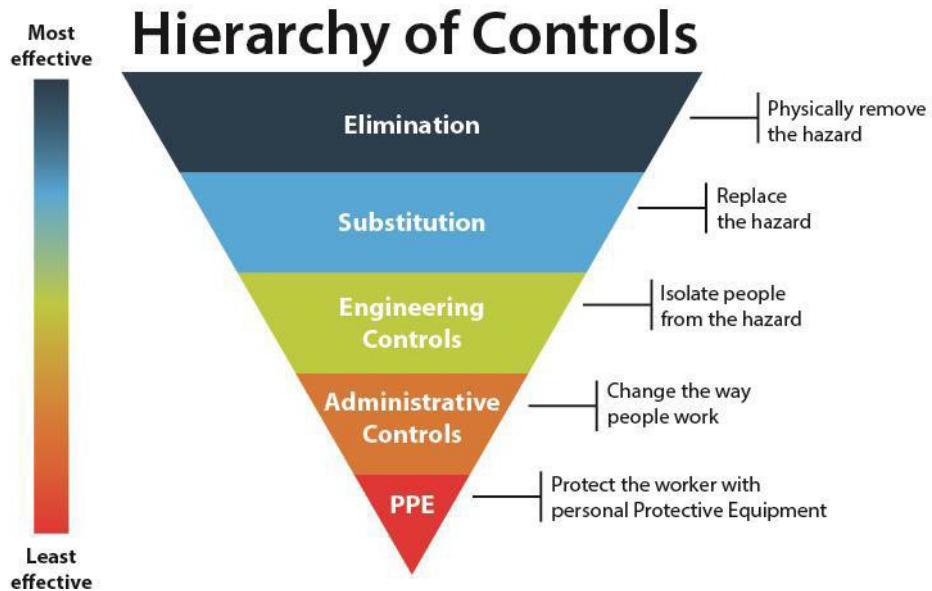
Once you have calculated the risk rating, you can determine what action to take.

Step 1: In the first instance, go to the risk acceptance guide (Table 1.4 below) to see what actions are advised.

Table 1.4 Risk acceptance guide

Descriptor	Risk acceptance guide	Action
Extreme	Not acceptable	Notify Church Contact Person / Synod Manager, Synod Safety Team and Risk and Insurance Services immediately. Corrective actions should be taken immediately. Cease or isolate source of risk.
High	Generally (in most circumstances) not acceptable	Notify Church Contact Person / Synod Manager, Synod Safety Team and Risk and Insurance Services immediately. Corrective actions should be taken within 48 hours of notification.
Medium	Generally (in most circumstances) acceptable	Notify Church Contact Person in Congregation and/or HSR. Contact Person and/or HSR to follow up that corrective action is taken within 7 days.
Low	Acceptable	Notify Church Contact Person in Congregation and/or HSR. Contact Person and/or HSR to follow up that corrective action is taken within a reasonable time.

Step 2: In implementing the action, refer also to the Hierarchy of Controls (below) to get an objective view of the effectiveness of that action and to understand whether you can do more to control or eliminate the risk.



Step 3: Document the action to be taken.

Step 4: Document who is responsible for implementing the action.

Step 5: Document the residual risk score, which must be at an acceptable (low or medium) level.

Step 6: The risk or hazard must be maintained at an acceptable level.



#### Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

*Event Safety Checklist*

*Working Bee Checklist*

*General Risk Assessment Form*

*Hazard Report Form*

*Workstation Risk Assessment Form*

*Manual Handling Task Risk Assessment Form*

*Job Safety Analysis Template*

**(Note:** A Job Safety Analysis cannot be applied to high-risk work. High risk work must be carried out by licensed/registered and insured contractors. This tool may be usefully applied to low or medium risk jobs in the absence of a Safe Operating Procedure.)

[www.victas.uca.org.au/internal-audit-risk](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/internal-audit-risk)

*Presbytery and Congregation RMF for Adoption 2019*

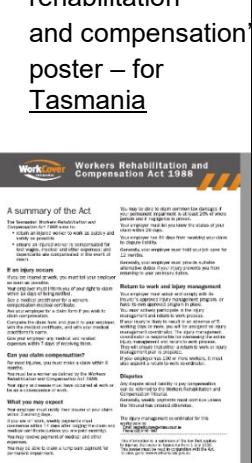
## Appendix 3: Noticeboard guide

Use this as a guide for information to display on noticeboards in church, hall and other buildings. This guide has been developed to ensure consistency throughout The Uniting Church in Australia VicTas.

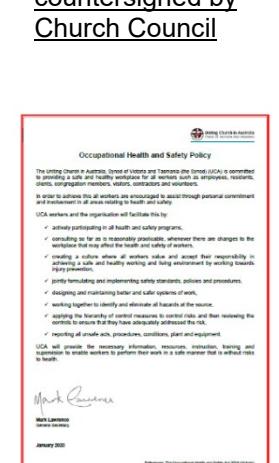
## 1 'If you are injured' poster - for Victoria



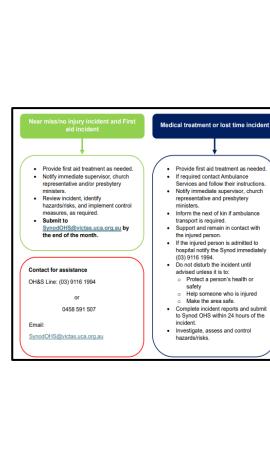
## 2 'Workers rehabilitation and compensation' poster – for Tasmania



## 3 OHS Policy – countersigned by Church Council



## 4 Incident Reporting Flowchart



<p><b>8 Emergency Procedures Flip Book</b></p> 	<p><b>9 AED Location (or nearest AED)</b></p> 	<p><b>10 First Aid Kit Location</b></p> 
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Health and Safety noticeboards should be used as a means of communicating Health and Safety information to workers, visitors, contractors and congregation members. The noticeboards should be located in common/prominent area within Church buildings. Noticeboards should not be placed in a location where they would create additional hazards, i.e. restricting access to fire safety equipment. Note that employees must be given information about workplace health and safety in appropriate languages.

## Required content for noticeboard

**Health and Safety noticeboards** should contain the following:

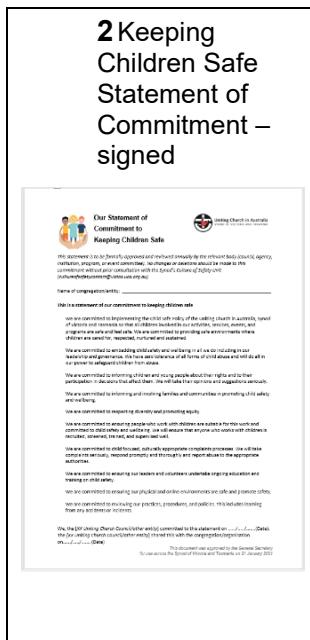
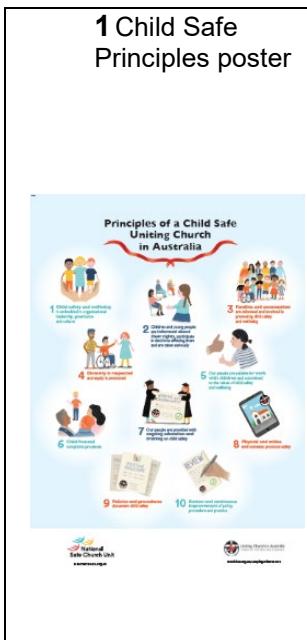
### Recommended

Other considerations for inclusion on Health and Safety noticeboards include:

- copies of the UCA Occupational Rehabilitation and Return to Work Policy, OHS Consultation and Issue Resolution Policy and OHS Issue Resolution Flowchart;
- Health and Safety Committee meeting minutes (if any);
- safety alerts relevant to the local area (if any); and
- any other information related to the local area / Church.

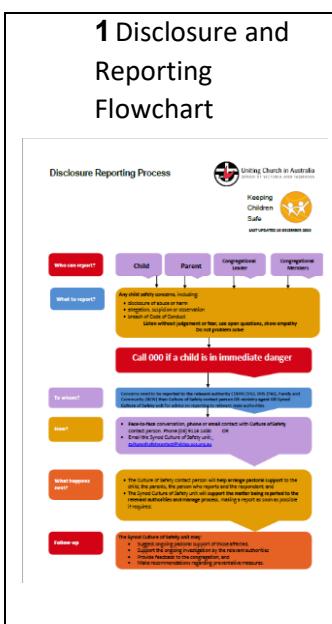
## Safe Church notices

Safe Church standards information should be displayed in general areas:



Safe Church standards information to be displayed in areas where children gather:

• Tools for listening



## Health and safety noticeboards should not contain:

- Personal advertisements
- Flyers, brochures etc. not relating to health and safety

## Maintenance

Health and Safety noticeboards shall be maintained as per agreement by the local Church Council.

## ALL DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE UCA WEBSITE AS FOLLOWS



Online resources and references

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs)

Under OHS NOTICEBOARD GUIDE

## Appendix 4: UCA website OHS resources guide

The following OHS resources can be found on the Synod VicTas website under Resources/Mission Resourcing/Occupational Health & Safety:  
[victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs/](http://victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs/)

### Health and Safety Manual

#### **UCA Health and Safety Manual**

A pdf copy of this manual that may be read online in Preview mode or downloaded.

### Safety planning

#### **OHS Policy**

A poster of Synod Occupational Health and Safety Policy Statement.

#### **OHS/WHS Consultation and Issue Resolution Policy & Flowchart**

A guide for all workers to the processes and roles in the resolution of workplace issues. It is recommended that it be displayed on a general noticeboard so that all workers can read it.

#### **OHS/WHS Activities Calendar**

A tool to assist workplace managers in planning and tracking the fulfilment of employer OHS obligations.

#### **OHS/WHS Plan Template**

A tool to assist workplace managers in planning and setting objectives to meet and improve workplace safety.

### Managing safety risks

#### **Hazard Report Form**

A tool to assist workplace managers to assess potential hazards posed by objects or situations and take appropriate action to manage the risk.

#### **General Risk Assessment Form**

A tool to assist workplace managers to assess potential hazards posed by general tasks and activities undertaken in the workplace and to take appropriate precautions to manage the risk.

#### **Manual Handling Task Risk Assessment Form**

A tool to assist workplace managers to assess potential hazards of manual tasks and activities undertaken in the workplace and to take appropriate precautions to manage the risk.

#### **Workstation Risk Assessment Form**

A tool to assist workplace managers to assess the ergonomics of a workstation and make adjustments to minimise the risk of discomfort, pain and injury.

#### **Chemical Register**

A template for the required record keeping.

**Hazardous Chemical Risk Assessment Form**

A tool to assist workplace managers to determine if hazardous substances and dangerous goods used and stored in the church pose a risk to persons, property or the environment according to WorkSafe Victoria and Worksafe Tasmania.

**Working Bee Checklist**

A tool to assist in preparations for a safe working bee to reduce risk.

**Food Temperature Danger Zone Chart**

A poster guide to safe keeping of food. It is recommended that it be displayed prominently in any kitchen where food is kept or prepared for gatherings, events and commercial purposes.

**Food Kitchen Cleaning and Sanitising Poster**

A poster guide to cleaning equipment and surfaces used in the preparation, storage and serving of food. It is recommended that it be displayed near the sink.

**Food Safety Rules Poster**

A poster guide to safe food storage temperatures, timelines and spaces. It is recommended that it be displayed in any kitchen where food is kept or prepared for gatherings, events and commercial purposes.

**Hand Hygiene for Food Handlers Poster**

A poster guide with step-by-step illustration of optimum hand hygiene practices. It is recommended that it be displayed prominently in the kitchen area.

**Kitchen Safety Checklist (non-commercial)**

A tool to assist workplace managers in equipping and maintaining a kitchen that is used for non-commercial events and gatherings.

**Job Safety Analysis (JSA) Template**

A tool to assist managers in assessing the level of risk involved in a particular task and to implement risk control measures.

**OHS/WHS Purchasing Checklist**

A tool to assist managers in assessing and mitigating the OHS/WHS risks of equipment proposed to hire, purchase or lease, or goods received as donation.

**Chemical Labelling GHS/ADG Quick Guide**

A tool to assist managers in labelling hazardous chemicals using a universally recognised system to meet legislative obligations.

**Event Safety Checklist**

A tool to assist event organisers in safety planning for events.

**Bullying and Harassment Information and Statement**

The UCA statement of policy, information about what constitutes bullying and harassment, approach to prevention and procedures to follow where issues arise. It is recommended this be displayed on a general noticeboard so that all workers can read it.

## Property safety management

### **Annual Maintenance and Property Inspection Checklist**

A tool to assist in the leasing of Church properties to ensure that Responsible Bodies of the Church meet their legal (Victorian and Tasmanian) annual maintenance compliance requirements.

### **OHS Working at Heights**

A poster guide to ladder safety and safe working height limits.

### **Annual Property Maintenance Inspection Supplementary Information**

An additional tool to help identify areas that are not compliant with legal and UCA standards of property safety and to develop a plan of action to address these.

### **Asset Management Plan Example**

A sample tool to assist in planning the required maintenance schedule for buildings, fixtures and equipment.

### **Electrical Equipment Register**

A template register for the required record keeping of checking and maintenance. To be filled in by a licensed electrician at the time of testing the equipment.

### **Testing and Inspection Intervals for Electrical Equipment**

A guide to recommended testing and inspection intervals that should be referred to in combination with the Australian and New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS 3760:2010) as a whole, and particularly Clause 2.1.

### **Equipment Maintenance Schedule Register**

A template schedule for the required record keeping of each item of plant, maintenance, training of operators and equipment testers.

### **Safety Switch Test Record**

A template schedule and guide for the required safety switch testing and recording of results at 6- and 12- month intervals.

### **How to Manage Asbestos**

A poster guide/flowchart for Church Councils and responsible bodies about to how to manage asbestos in their buildings.

### **Asbestos-Containing Materials Log**

A template register for recording all asbestos assessment, asbestos-related works carried out and status. Must be available for contractors and consultants to check before commencing work.

### **SOP – Platform Step Ladder**

A guide to the use of platform step ladders and Church safe-operating procedure.

### **SOP – Safety Step**

A guide to the use of safety steps and Church safe-operating procedure.

### **Playground Safety Checklist**

A checklist template for managers to record areas of safety risk in the playground that require regular checking and maintenance. The completed checklist should be supplied to the congregation leader or property officer.

### **Key Control Register Template**

A register template for recording those with key access to grounds, buildings and equipment.

## **Training, induction and contractor management**

### **QR Code**

A poster that displays the Linksafe QR code for contractors and consultants to check in on arrival at the Church work site. Note that contractors and consultants need to have already gone through the Church Online Safety Induction Procedure.

### **Contractor and Consultant Online Safety Induction Procedure**

A poster guide explaining the steps involved before the contractor and consultant can begin work.

### **Contractor and Consultant Safety Obligations**

#### **Safety Induction Checklist (Employees, Volunteers and Sole Traders)**

A tool for managers to induct new employees and volunteers into the safety features and requirements of the workplace and their obligations in relation to these.

### **Training Needs Analysis Form**

A tool to assist managers to identify and plan training needs of workers.

### **Training Plan and Record Form**

A register to record the training history of workers.

## **Emergency preparedness**

### **Annual Evacuation and Assessment Form**

A checklist and evaluation form for managers to use when conducting the required annual emergency evacuation drill.

### **First Aid Kit Contents Checklist**

A checklist for first aid officers to use every three months to ensure the first aid kit is fully equipped and stock is renewed according to expiry dates.

### **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan**

A tool to assist managers in identifying and making a tailored plan for any person who has a disability who would require special assistance during an evacuation procedure.

### **Bomb/Substance and Phone Threat Checklist**

A checklist for those in receipt of threatening phone calls that offers prompts for the sort of information they might try to elicit from the caller and record for further investigation.

### **Offender Identification Form**

A checklist to prompt a witness in recording key identifying information about an offender.

### **Emergency Procedures Flip Book**

A reference and step-by-step guide for a variety of emergency scenarios.

### **Emergency Contacts Template**

A poster template to display all relevant contact numbers and addresses that may be required in the event of making an emergency call to 000.

## Incident/near miss reporting

### **Incident Reporting Flowchart**

A poster guide outlining the obligations and steps to take according to the type and seriousness of the incident.

### **Incident/Near Miss Report Form – Part 1**

A template for recording all the details of an incident/near miss and a tool for classifying its severity in terms of OHS reporting responsibilities.

### **Incident/Near Miss Investigation Form – Part 2**

A template and tool for investigating and analysing the incident and determining prevention measures.

### **Incident/Near Miss Register Template**

A register template to track all incidents and near misses in the workplace and record key details and dates.

## Workers' compensation and rehabilitation

### **Synod Occupational Rehabilitation and Return to Work Policy – Vic**

A poster required to be displayed in Victorian workplaces.

### **Synod Occupational Rehabilitation and Return to Work Policy – Tas**

A poster required to be displayed in Tasmanian workplaces.

## OHS noticeboard

### **Culture of Safety Contact Person**

A template for a sign to inform all workers and visitors of the Church's culture of safety and the relevant person to contact should there be any concerns for the safety of any person, and particularly children.

### **Disclosure and Reporting Flowchart**

A poster showing the reporting procedure when there are safety concerns for a child.

### **Child Safe Principles Poster**

A poster explaining the UCA child safe principles.

### **OHS Noticeboard Guide for Congregations**

A guide for managers about noticeboard placement and content to be displayed both to fulfil legal obligations and for consistency across the UCA.

### **If You are Injured at Work Poster – Vic**

WorkSafe poster to be displayed in Victorian workplaces.

### **Workers Rehabilitation & Compensation Poster – Tas**

WorkCover poster to be displayed in Tasmanian workplaces.

### **Synod Occupational Health and Safety Policy**

A poster of Synod Occupational Health and Safety Policy Statement.

### **Incident Reporting Flowchart**

A poster guide outlining the obligations and steps to take according to the type and seriousness of the incident.

**OHS Contact Person**

A poster template to display contact details for the designated OHS person in your workplace.

**First Aid Officer**

A poster template to display contact details for the person designated as the First Aid Officer in your workplace.

**Fire Wardens**

A poster template to display contact details for the people designated as Fire Wardens in your workplace.

**Emergency Telephone Numbers**

A poster template to display all relevant contact numbers and addresses that may be required in the event of making an emergency call to 000.

**Emergency Procedures Flip Book**

A reference and step-by-step guide for a variety of emergency scenarios.

**AED Location**

A poster template to display information about the location of the AED (Automated External Defibrillator).

**First Aid Kit Location**

A poster template to display information about the location of the first aid kit.

**Synod Occupational Rehabilitation and Return to Work Policy – Vic**

A poster required to be displayed in Victorian workplaces.

**Synod Occupational Rehabilitation and Return to Work Policy – Tas**

A poster required to be displayed in Tasmanian workplaces.

**Synod OHS/WHS Consultation and Issue Resolution Policy & Flowchart**

A poster of the Synod Policy Statement & Flowchart to ensure effective and compliant OHS issue resolution.

**VicTas Synod Keeping Children Safe Statement of Commitment**

A poster of the Synod commitment to keeping children safe that should be formally approved and signed annually by the relevant congregation or entity of the Church.

**Information for Children and Young Adults**

A poster addressing young people in the Church and informing them of the standards of communication in the Church that they can expect and follow to help create a safe place for all.

## Other website resources

[WorkSafe Victoria](#)

[WorkSafe Tasmania](#)

[Safe Work Australia](#)

[Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#)

[Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017](#)

[Work Health and Safety Act 2012](#)

[Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022](#)

[Compliance codes and codes of practice \(Vic\)](#)

[Codes of practice – WorkSafe Tasmania \(Tas\)](#)

[Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 \(Vic\)](#)

[Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2014 \(Vic\)](#)

[Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 \(Tas\)](#)

[Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2011 \(Tas\)](#)

[Food Act 1984 \(Vic\)](#)

[Food Act 2003 \(Tas\)](#)

[Food Regulations 2012 \(Tas\)](#)

[Guide to Food Safety Standards, Chapter 3 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, 2016](#)

[National Construction Codes Website \(Register here\)](#)

## Synod Office Support Contacts

### Occupational Health and Safety

Phone: (03) 9116 1994 / 0458 591 507

Email: [SynodOHS@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:SynodOHS@victas.uca.org.au)

### People and Culture

Email: [people&culture@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:people&culture@victas.uca.org.au)

### Culture of Safety (Child Safety)

Email: [cultureofsafetycontact@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:cultureofsafetycontact@victas.uca.org.au)

### Property Services

Email: [property@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:property@victas.uca.org.au)

### Insurance Services

Email: [insurance@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:insurance@victas.uca.org.au)