



# Health and Safety

for congregations

## *Consultation and Communication*

### How this guide can help you

The Bible guides us to look not only after our own interests, but also the interests of others (Philippians 2:4). To achieve this, we must include people directly impacted by decisions that affect their health and safety.

#### In this section you will learn

- Why it is important to consult
- Who you must consult with
- What good consultation looks like
- When you must consult

#### The practical tools you will find

- A sample record of consultation
- A sample consultation procedure

### Why consult

A safe workplace is more easily achieved when everyone involved communicates with each other to identify hazards and risks. It is also important to talk about any health and safety concerns and work together to find solutions. First-hand knowledge and experience from those involved will also help ensure nothing is overlooked.

#### Effective consultation has other benefits

- Individuals actively involved in decision-making will have a greater awareness and commitment to decisions made
- It can foster positive working relationships, because understanding the views of others leads to greater co-operation and trust
- It can help you meet your legal requirements to consult about safety matters

### Who must you consult with?

You must consult with staff and anyone else you engage to carry out work for you, about health and safety issues. This includes ministers and other workers and anyone else who may be directly affected by any health and safety matter.

In some instances, we may need to consult with other organisations to keep everyone safe, such as those who use or hire our facilities. When this occurs, we are required to share information to find out who is doing what and work together in a cooperative and coordinated way.





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### What good consultation looks like

Good consultation involves sharing information, giving those involved an opportunity to express their views and taking these views into consideration before a decision is made. It is also important to follow up anyone involved in the consultation process to let them know the outcome and how the decision was achieved.

In a congregation, you might choose to consult with your staff and volunteers directly or have regular meetings where health and safety is an agenda item. However you decide to consult, make sure everyone who is impacted by the decision is included. Documenting your consultation arrangements will help everyone know what to expect. This is also a legal requirement.

Don't worry - we have some tools to help.

### When should I consult?

- There is a health and safety decision to be made and it affects the work people
- Identifying health and safety hazards and appropriate controls
- Considering the best way to provide training and instruction to keep everyone safe
- When there is a change to the facilities in the church or the work environment, equipment or a change in process

Consultation and communication should however not be limited to these reasons. Regular consultation and communication can help you identify and resolve issues before they present problems.

### Commit to action

- Download the sample consultation procedure found [here](#)
- Talk with your staff and volunteers about how you will consult in your congregation
- Document your health and safety consultation procedure
- Make records following consultation. You may choose to keep meeting minutes or use the template found [here](#)

