

SCACR Health & Safety Policy

March 2025



The Sussex County Association of Change Ringers (SCACR) recognises that it is important to promote a safe culture where risks are minimised so that all people that take part in bellringing activities, organised by the Association and its Districts, are kept safe.

1 What is this document for?

This document applies to all ringing activities that are organised by SCACR (at Association or District level) and that SCACR is responsible for. An Association event is defined as open to all members (although there may be a minimum competency, or a limit to numbers, or other restrictions), advertised to all members, and must be suitably risk assessed with a risk assessment form submitted to the General Secretary prior to the event.

This may include:

- ringing at organised meetings, outings and events
- business meetings
- social activities
- fundraising events
- volunteer labour on bell restoration projects
- training sessions.

This policy does not cover any activity that SCACR members undertake that have not been organised by SCACR, but we would encourage members to use it as a guide when organising their own events.

2 General statement

- 2.1 All officers and members of SCACR are required to promote a safeguarding and risk averse culture (see separate Safeguarding Policy).
- 2.2 All officers and members should identify possible risks of damage and injury to a person while attending SCACR activities. They should then take reasonable steps to reduce such risks by taking appropriate action.
- 2.3 SCACR endorses the advice and information provided by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR) on health and safety for bell ringers.
- 2.4 The general committee of SCACR has the oversight of this policy and may revise and re-issue guidance as required.
- 2.5 Building owners (e.g. church authorities) have legal responsibility for health and safety on their premises, and checks of their buildings. SCACR event organisers (the Organiser) should ensure building owners / church officers are aware of any events we hold on their premises.
- 2.6 It is SCACR policy that a formal Risk Assessment be normally undertaken for all SCACR events.
- 2.7 Risk Assessments will take into account:
 - **Hazard:** something with the potential to cause harm

- **Who may be harmed and how:** an analysis of persons who may be harmed and the possible damage to their wellbeing
- **Control measures:** what needs to be done to mitigate the risk

3 Organisational considerations for general events:

- 3.1 The Organiser should make enquiries to ensure that the tower and bells or venue are safe to use and that there is a current Risk Assessment in place. He/she will need to rely upon the information provided by the local tower/venue representative. For events involving tower bell ringing, if it is known that the bells have not been rung recently, a BRF rep or steeple-keeper should inspect the belfry in advance of the event (if this is not possible, that tower should not be used to host Association events).
- 3.2 In addition, the Organiser must carry out a written risk assessment prior to the event using the template (Appendix 1) as a guide. This should be completed with the necessary details and passed to the event leader(s) for any further action as necessary. They should share this document with any other organisers. This should be completed for all events with more than 5 people attending. This risk assessment should be kept for 3 years and a copy sent to the General Secretary.
- 3.3 Participants should be provided with clear details of the time and location of the event, what to expect when they arrive and any additional information about parking, local facilities and access restrictions.
- 3.4 A register of people attending the event must be taken by the person responsible for running the event. This should be kept by the District Secretary or Association General Secretary (for District / Association events, respectively), for a period of 16 years.
- 3.5 For events involving ringing, someone generally agreed to be competent should be nominated to run the ringing.
- 3.6 The person responsible for running the event should have emergency contact details for the venue. They should have means to contact the emergency services if necessary, and know the street name and postcode or What3Words code for the location.
- 3.7 The person responsible for running the event should ensure that everyone leaves the event safely. No one should be left stranded, locked in or alone after an event, especially when the location is remote or it finishes in the late evening.
- 3.8 The person responsible for running the event should ensure that SCACR safeguarding policy and procedures are followed.

4 Considerations for bellringing events:

In addition to the requirements for general events (section 3), the organiser must consider the following:

- 4.1 The organiser should establish for each tower whether an emergency plan exists and what emergency facilities are available. This should appear in the risk assessment.
- 4.2 The organiser should find out about the state of the bells before ringing starts, and on arrival identify the location of the emergency facilities, for example emergency exits, firefighting equipment and first aid kit.
- 4.3 The organiser should designate a competent person to be a ringing master to supervise and direct all ringing activities.
- 4.4 Where learners or inexperienced ringers are expected to attend an event, the organiser should ensure that there are sufficient experienced people present to supervise.
- 4.5 The person responsible for running the event should prevent overcrowding in the ringing chamber or obstruction of ropes. Where possible, they should discourage people from climbing on ladders.

(see appended template for detailed consideration of possible risks and possible control measures).

5 Accidents

In case of accident, the person(s) responsible should :-

- Give priority to attending the injured person with any appropriate First Aid
- Summon the emergency services without delay
- Give address, postcode or What3Words location of the site
- Record name and address of injured person and others present, time and place and any other relevant details including photographs
- Keep in touch to find out extent of injury, treatment given and whether any hospitalisation was for more than 24 hours.
- Do not discuss responsibility
- Report accidents to the General Secretary and to premises/location owner, using the SCACR accident report form (see Appendix 2)
- Enter the details into the accident book for the venue, or report details to the person responsible for the venue's accident reporting

Bell ringing is not “employment” unless some kind of payment is being made other than expenses. It is a voluntary activity which should follow the spirit of health and safety guidance given to employed persons. For those involved in voluntary activities only deaths and serious injury accidents need to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the UK – or if in a Church to the relevant Local Authority. A serious injury accident is one in which the injured person is referred to hospital for treatment for longer than 24 hours. It does not include being kept in for observation. The General Secretary will report to the HSE if required.

6 Monitoring and review of policy

This policy should be reviewed annually and published on the SCACR website.

Document Control

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Approved by and date: General Committee, 1 March 2025

Notes and latest changes: definition of an Association event added; policy wording reviewed and clarified; competent person to run ringing added; retention period for register added; accident reporting procedure updated; template risk assessment reviewed and updated; accident report form introduced (Appendix 2); document control note added

● **Appendix 1: Risk Assessment Template**

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Risk Assessment Sample Template (Adapt, delete/add as appropriate)

Event description:	
Location:	
Date of event:	
Name of leader:	

Written risk assessments aid organisers to think about possible risks and take action to minimise them. This template is an example and can support leaders to think about possible hazards.

The organiser should send a copy of the risk assessment to the General Secretary.

What are the hazards?	Who may be harmed and how?	Control measures: What needs to be done or has been done already?	Details, what, if any, further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?
Locations including churches and bell towers which are not well known to attendees	All Accidents, slips and trips especially after dark	<p><i>Leader to find out the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>details of location – particular hazards, difficult access, toilet and welfare facilities and parking.</i> <i>emergency / tower contacts</i> <i>building/ tower access/ exit details, bells up/down, clock hammers, lights, emergency lighting, heating</i> <i>whether there are any difficulties with the bells</i> <i>are any other activities on at the church at the same time.</i> <p><i>Leader to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>circulate details of event including any particular known hazards</i> <i>designate a ringing master for each tower if on an outing</i> 			
On a ringing related activity: Ringing ability of attendees is not	Inexperienced ringers	<p><i>Leader to find out the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the ringing abilities of all attendees.</i> <p><i>Leader to ensure that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>inexperienced ringers are appropriately supervised</i> 			

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known	Possible accident and injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>non-ringers are not permitted to ring unless undertaking an appropriate training course</i> <i>individuals are advised of risks and safety precautions ie keep feet on floor, do not touch the ropes, stay seated/still during ringing.</i> <i>experienced ringers are always present</i> 			
Crowded ringing rooms	All Possible accident and injury	<i>Leader to ensure that:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>ringing can be undertaken safely and those not ringing are also safe.</i> <i>attendees to move to a safe place, standing or sitting with feet on the ground</i> <i>the number of people in the tower is reduced if necessary.</i> 			
Security of tower(s) or other locations	For towers: Non ringers gaining access to the bells and ropes - major injuries from accidentally pulling ropes or moving bells whilst up	<i>Leader to ensure that:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the church/building is secure as advised by the contact person</i> <i>they are alert to unknown individuals</i> <i>the tower/church/other location is secured appropriately on leaving</i> 			
Power cuts whilst in the process of ringing	Loss of control of the ropes resulting in all personnel in the area at risk of becoming snagged by the ropes and suffer injuries	<i>Leader to check If there is there automatic emergency lighting in place enabling the bells to be safely stood or lowered</i>			
Fire in building	All	<i>Leader to ensure that they:</i>			

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	Serious injury/death.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locate fire exits • know location of any fire extinguisher in tower • follow any specific procedures as advised by the local Risk Assessment if provided 			
Transport – if arranged as communal	<p>Users of transport</p> <p>Various injuries</p>	<p>Event organiser to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposed transport is appropriate for users (disabled, elderly, youngsters...) • the transport has been maintained in a safe and usable condition • the driver is appropriately qualified and able, and will drive safely and within the law • the pick-up and drop-off locations, and consequential access to the event is safe • the driver will take responsibility for ensuring all users are in the vehicle before setting off • good practice as provided by safeguarding guidance is followed if individuals are providing private transport for under-18s 			
Young people attending event	Young people	<p>Event organiser to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safeguarding procedures are followed according to safeguarding policy and best practice • at least one DBS checked adult is present • emergency contact of under 18s' details are available • young people are collected by a parent at end of session, unless parent has allowed otherwise. 			
Food poisoning at event involving catering	All	<p>Catering organiser to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food is not kept uncovered and unattended for long periods of time • appropriate action is taken to refrigerate food in warm weather • any freshly cooked food is served immediately as appropriate • general food hygiene is followed by those handling or preparing food. 			
Scalding at catering event	All	Specified persons handle hot water appliances following good practice.			

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Event and location specific hazards					

Note that details of any accidents must be reported to the Association General Secretary and to the event venue as soon as possible

● **Appendix 2: Accident Report Form**

Any accident that takes place during an SCACR organised event (i.e. District or Association event) must be reported to the General Secretary (secretary@scacr.org) using this form, as soon as possible after the incident occurred.



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To comply with relevant legislation, the details of any accident that results in an injury must also be recorded in the 'Accident Book' or equivalent, at the church or location where the accident occurred. If more than one person was injured in the accident, then you should include the details "About the person who had the accident" for each injured person in the "Additional information" at the end of this form.

About the person who had the accident

Full Name

Address

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Postcode

Occupation

Age (if under 18)

Briefly describe the activity being undertaken by this person at the time of the accident:

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Was this person injured in any way during the accident? If so, what injuries were sustained?

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Was any first aid or medical treatment given to this person? If so, what first aid or treatment was given?

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About the person reporting the accident

Full Name

Address

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Postcode

Briefly describe your role in the activity being undertaken at the time of the accident:

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Who was in overall charge of the activity being undertaken at the time of the accident?

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About the accident

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Date of accidentTime of Accident

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Where did the accident take place?

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Briefly describe how the accident happened:

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What do you consider to have been the cause(s) of the accident?

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Additional Information (include here, where applicable):

- The details “About the person who had the accident” for any additional injured person(s)
- The names and contact details of any witnesses
- Any other information that you consider to be relevant. Use additional sheets if necessary