

Temporarily closed or unoccupied churches and church properties during COVID-19

25 March 2020

Methodist Insurance

Risk management

Guidance for managing temporarily closed churches and other church properties during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK and Government advice on avoiding social contact to combat the spread of the virus, churches and other church properties will be temporarily closing.

Buildings, whether temporarily closed or permanently unoccupied can be at greater risk from the likes of arson, antisocial behaviour such as vandalism or squatters, theft, and escape of water.

We have highlighted below some top tips for the protection of your church and other properties whilst they are temporarily closed as a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Top 5 priorities for temporarily closed churches and church properties

In the context of a temporary closure, here are the top priorities to help you keep your church property safe:

1. Protect against electrical fires - turn off and unplug electrical equipment

Electrical equipment should be turned off and unplugged, and electrical systems isolated at the main fuse board, with the exception of any:

- intruder alarms
- fire alarms
- security or other risk protection systems or devices.

These should be maintained to ensure they continue to fully and effectively protect the property at all times.

2. Guard against escape of water losses

Where there will be no need to re-enter church property during the period of temporary closure turn off any water supplies at the mains (and where reasonable to do so drain down water systems).

We recognise it may not always be appropriate to turn off or drain down water systems. Where this is the case a minimum temperature of 7°C (45°F) should be maintained within the property if possible.

3. Protect your property

Securing the property against unauthorised access. Remove any internal waste and position external bins as far from church property as possible.

Ask any neighbours in the vicinity of church property to report any suspicious activity.

4. Try to periodically check the property

If possible, arrange for someone to visit the church property on a weekly basis to check it remains secure, whilst following the latest government guidelines on travel/movement of people.

Could people taking their permitted daily exercise or shopping for essentials pass by the church?

5. Review your health and safety arrangements

Review your health and safety arrangements, focusing on any additional precautions that might be necessary to secure the premises and protect people from danger.

If your church is permanently unoccupied you can click here to access [our guide to protecting permanently unoccupied churches](#).

We would also encourage you to continue to monitor and follow the latest government advice, as the situation is evolving rapidly.