



WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

THE RIDGEWAY LONDON NW7 1RN
TELEPHONE 020 8906 2211

LDD:LDS July 15, 2019

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN BRITAIN

Re: Kingdom Hall Information

Dear Brothers:

1. This letter replaces the letter dated LDD:LDS April 13, 2017, to all bodies of elders regarding Kingdom Hall Information. It provides frequently requested information on the maintenance and operation of the Kingdom Hall and should be read in conjunction with information found in the *Shepherd* book, chapter 21.

2. **Waste Collection.** Kingdom Halls, as places of worship, are entitled to have refuse collected by the Local Authority without charge. If problems are encountered, contact the Local Design/Construction Department (LDC) at the branch office for advice. There is no requirement for Kingdom Halls to have a specific arrangement for the collection of sanitary waste.

3. **Registering Kingdom Halls as places of worship and for marriages.** Kingdom Halls should be registered as places of worship so that they are exempt from paying business rates. Specific guidance on this subject will be provided by the branch-appointed field representative at the time of a new Kingdom Hall construction project.

4. **First Aid.** Kingdom Halls are not required by law to keep a first-aid kit on the premises. If the body/bodies of elders choose to make such a provision, ensure that the contents are properly maintained. Such a kit would normally contain sterile hypo-allergenic plasters, eye pads, eyewash solution, triangular bandages, safety pins, medium and large dressings, individually wrapped wipes, disposable vinyl or blue nitrile examination gloves (not latex because of allergy) and a roll of microporous tape. The quantities should be based on the size of the congregation and the history of need. A simple (mouth-to-mouth) resuscitation protector is also advisable. The kit should be regularly checked to ensure all items are present and that the use-by date has not expired. Once something is used, it should be replaced. If food preparation is occasionally carried out at the Kingdom Hall, blue plasters should be available. A simple biohazard spill kit is advisable for safe clean-up of body fluids such as vomit. There is no legal requirement to have an appointed first aider at a Kingdom Hall. The congregation elders may, however, choose to do so.

5. **Safety Law.** The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, does not apply to Kingdom Halls. Volunteers are not paid for any work done on the property, and no legal relationship is intended between volunteers and the trustees of the congregation. However, good safety practices should still be observed, and we view legal requirements as our minimum standard where they are relevant to our operations.—*Shepherd*, chap. 21, pars. 27-29.

6. There is no need to display any safety posters such as the Health and Safety Law poster, nor is there any need to report injuries to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or prepare a health and safety policy. You must display a “No Smoking” sign in the required format at the entrance.

7. If Local Authority or HSE inspectors ask to enter the hall, you may allow them to do so. However, although they may make observations they should be aware that as there are no employers or employees, they would not normally have enforceable rights under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Confidential information should not be disclosed.

8. **Asbestos.** Kingdom Halls built prior to January 2004 should have an asbestos survey on file. If such a survey has not been carried out, please have an 'asbestos management survey' carried out by a local company on a commercial basis. The results of the survey should be kept in the Kingdom Hall maintenance file. Material containing asbestos in a Kingdom Hall is unlikely to pose a threat to attendees as long as it remains undisturbed. If asbestos is identified by a management survey, please send a copy of the report to the LDC.

9. **Fire Safety.** This is an important matter and an area in which the law directly applies to our Kingdom Halls. Please follow the guidance given in the letter dated LDE:LDG August 9, 2017, regarding Kingdom Hall Fire Safety. A supplier arrangement for P50 foam fire extinguishers is available on jw.org.

10. **Security.** All openings should be secured before leaving the building. Security blocks and bolts, including wooden blocks that are fitted behind the panic bar, are not recommended and must not be used on fire exit doors when the hall is occupied. However, if due to specific local circumstances the bodies of elders decide that blocks or bolts are necessary to secure the hall when not in use, they must be immediately removed or disengaged by the first person entering the property when the hall is in use. Some Kingdom Halls in higher-risk areas have installed electronic security systems. If installed, these systems should be maintained in good working order. Prior to installing a system, the body of elders should contact the Local Design/Construction Department to determine if it is warranted for their Kingdom Hall.

We trust that this information will be of assistance to you as you care for the maintenance and operation of the Kingdom Hall in which you meet. Please be assured of our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

Watch Tower B. & J. Society
OF BRITAIN

PS to the secretary:

This letter should be retained in the congregation file along with other material relating to the Kingdom Hall. Please arrange for a copy of this letter to be provided to the maintenance coordinator and members of the Kingdom Hall Operating Committee.