COSHH Risk Assessment and Guidance

Parish of Thornton & Allerton

General Cleaning for Churches and Halls Premises

Location

Church buildings including sanctuary, halls, kitchens, toilets, offices, entrances, and storage areas.

Role General Cleaning

Assessment Date **June 2026**
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What is COSHH?

The **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)** Regulations help protect people from harmful substances used in the workplace. Even an ordinary cleaning cupboard can become a tiny chemistry dragon's den if products are mixed or handled carelessly. ⚠️

This guidance helps ensure cleaning is carried out safely and responsibly.

Common Hazardous Substances Used

Substance/Product	Hazard	Possible Harm
Disinfectants	Irritant	Skin irritation, breathing irritation
Bleach	Corrosive/Irritant	Burns, harmful fumes
Toilet Cleaner	Corrosive	Eye and skin damage
Glass Cleaner	Irritant	Eye irritation
Multi-surface Sprays	Irritant	Skin irritation
Floor Cleaner	Irritant	Slips and skin irritation
Descalers	Corrosive	Burns and respiratory irritation

Persons at Risk

- Everyone
- Cleaners
- Church staff
- Volunteers
- Clergy
- Visitors
- Children
- Elderly or vulnerable persons
- Contractors

Main Risks Identified

Hazard	Risk
Contact with chemicals	Skin burns, dermatitis, eye injury
Inhaling fumes or sprays	Respiratory irritation
Mixing chemicals (especially bleach and acids)	Toxic gas release
Spillages	Slips and falls
Incorrect storage	Accidental exposure
Unlabelled containers	Misuse or poisoning
Poor ventilation	Build-up of harmful vapours

Control Measures

Safe Use of Cleaning Chemicals

- Always read manufacturer labels and instructions before use.
- Never mix cleaning products.
- Use only the recommended amount.
- Dilute products correctly where required.
- Keep lids securely closed when not in use.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The following PPE should be available and worn where appropriate:

- Disposable or reusable gloves
- Protective apron
- Eye protection for strong chemicals
- Non-slip footwear

Replace damaged PPE immediately.

Ventilation

- Open windows and doors where possible during cleaning.
- Avoid excessive spraying in confined areas.

Storage

- Store chemicals in a locked or secure cleaning cupboard.
- Keep products in original labelled containers.
- Never decant chemicals into drinks bottles or unlabelled containers.
- Keep away from children and food preparation areas.

Spillages

- Clean spills immediately.
- Use warning signs for wet floors.
- Dispose of waste materials safely.

Manual Handling

- Avoid carrying excessive loads of cleaning supplies.
- Use trolleys where available.

Emergency Procedures

Skin Contact

- Wash immediately with plenty of water.
- Remove contaminated clothing.
- Seek medical advice if irritation continues.

Eye Contact

- Rinse eyes with clean water for at least 10 minutes.
- Seek medical attention immediately if symptoms persist.

Inhalation

- Move to fresh air.
- Seek medical help if breathing difficulties occur.

Accidental Ingestion

- Do not induce vomiting.
- Seek immediate medical advice.
- Show product label or safety data sheet.

Training Requirements

Cleaners should receive instruction on:

- Safe chemical handling
- COSHH awareness
- PPE use
- Safe storage procedures
- Spill response
- Manual handling
- Reporting accidents or concerns

Safe Working Guidance for Cleaners

Before Cleaning

- Check you have the correct products.
- Inspect PPE before use.
- Put out wet floor signs where necessary.

During Cleaning

- Follow product instructions carefully.
- Work methodically room by room.
- Keep chemicals away from children and visitors.
- Avoid trailing cables or trip hazards.

After Cleaning

- Wash hands thoroughly.
- Return products to secure storage.
- Dispose of waste appropriately.
- Report damaged equipment or low supplies.

Additional Church Considerations

Because churches are public and worship spaces:

- Be aware of prayer areas and sensitive items.
- Avoid leaving chemicals unattended during services or events.
- Extra care should be taken during funerals, weddings, children's activities, and community events.
- Ensure cleaning cupboards remain locked when visitors are present.

First Aid and Reporting

All accidents, spillages, or reactions to cleaning products should be:

1. Reported immediately
2. Recorded in the accident book
3. Reviewed to prevent recurrence

Emergency contact numbers should be clearly displayed.

For persons using cleaning products

Employee / Volunteer Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood this COSHH guidance and agree to follow safe working procedures.

Name	Signature	Date

Manager / Supervisor Declaration

I confirm suitable instruction, supervision, and PPE have been provided.

Name	Signature	Date