

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



The Ridgeway, London, NW7 1RN Telephone: 020 8906 2211

LDA:LDB October 15, 2015

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Kingdom Hall Information

Dear Brothers:

1. This letter replaces the *Kingdom Hall Manual*, which has proved useful for a number of years but has now become outdated in many areas. Existing copies of that document should be removed from congregation files and destroyed, although the maintenance records, Fire Risk Assessments and associated fire record keeping and notices should be retained until further direction is received.

2. The purpose of this letter is to provide helpful information that may assist with the operation of the Kingdom Hall. For specific information regarding the Kingdom Hall servant and Kingdom Hall operating committee, please refer to the letters to all bodies of elders dated November 2, 1995 and April 15, 1997.

3. **Record keeping.** The following documents should be kept in connection with the Kingdom Hall:

- Up-to-date as-built drawings.
- Equipment installation and operation guides, as well as warranty information.
- Equipment maintenance and servicing records.
- Records of any equipment that is replaced between biennial facility condition surveys.
- Records of utility costs.
- Purchase records for maintenance equipment and supplies.

4. **Ownership and property trustees.** Separate correspondence will be issued in connection with the current ownership arrangements for Kingdom Halls.

5. **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.

6. **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.

7. **First aid.** Kingdom Halls are not required by law to keep a first aid box 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.

8. **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.

9. 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. In the event of an accident, the branch office should be informed by means of an *Incident Report (TO-5)*. You must display a “No Smoking” sign in the required format at the entrance.

10. 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.—See letter to all bodies of elders dated November 6, 2014, pars. 10, 11.

11. **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 write to the LDC Department at the branch office.

12. **Electrical safety.** Only competent persons should work on electrical systems. An inspection should be carried out by a qualified, competent person at a maximum interval of every five years. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) should be carried out at the same interval. Supply the inspector with a copy of the current Kingdom Hall asbestos survey report, if applicable.

13. **Gas safety.** Gas appliances should be checked annually by a Gas Safe Registered engineer and records of such checks should be retained securely.

14. **Security.** The security features of a Kingdom Hall should reflect the actual risk in an area. For example, in some areas it may not be necessary to have a fence or a security alarm. If adjustments are felt to be needed to the existing security arrangements at a Kingdom Hall, please write to the LDC Department at the branch office.

15. **Fire safety.** This is an important matter and an area in which the law directly applies to our Kingdom Halls. Please retain the Fire Risk Assessment and other fire-related direction provided in the former *Kingdom Hall Manual*, although, as explained in our letter LDA:LDB August 4, 2015, the Chubb contract is no longer in force. We shall soon be providing updated information on how to continue to comply with fire safety law.

16. A potential area of concern in Kingdom Halls is the risk of hand driers catching fire due to a build up of dust or debris within the casing. The internal components of hand driers should periodically be cleaned (especially after renovation works have taken place). If the hand drier cas-

ing is removed, the individual handling this task should be competent to work with electrical equipment and the power isolated. **Please note that hand driers in Kingdom Halls are gradually being phased out and replaced with hand towel dispensers, so no new hand driers should be purchased.** See jw.org for current details of the hand towel dispenser supplier arrangement.

17. We trust that this information will be of help 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,
*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

PS to the secretary:

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