

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



675 Red Mills Road Wallkill NY 12589-3292 Phone: (845) 306-1100

May 13, 2016

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Safely Maintaining Our Places of Worship

Dear Brothers:

King Hezekiah set an excellent example of zeal for true worship by repairing the temple and organizing the priests and the Levites to cleanse God's house. (2 Chron. 29:16-18) The Levites had to prepare themselves to do the work assigned. (2 Chron. 29:15) Similarly, we need to prepare ourselves to care for our places of worship. This preparation includes promoting safe work practices and establishing a safe work environment. Our love for Jehovah moves us to reflect his love for life and to do everything reasonably possible to prevent harming ourselves or others. (Prov. 22:3) Therefore, it is important to have a positive attitude toward safety with the goal of creating an accident-free environment at our places of worship.

To assist in accomplishing this goal, we are happy to inform you that a new document entitled *Working Together Safely—Standards for Theocratic Construction and Maintenance* (DC-82) has been prepared. It replaces the booklet *Working Together Safely—Safety Rules and Standards for Volunteer Projects* (S-109), which should be removed from the congregation permanent file. This new document promotes safety during construction and maintenance projects as well as other tasks that involve a measure of risk, such as working with power tools, using ladders, accessing roofs, or performing electrical work. Those involved with this type of work should be provided an electronic or printed copy of the new document. Before members of the congregation can assist with such tasks, they must read and sign the Statement of Commitment found on page 2 of their personal copy. Additionally, before assignments are given for activities with a measure of risk, those overseeing the work will give clear safety reminders.

As elders, it is expected that you will take the lead in setting a good example by being both safety conscious and alert to unsafe work habits. Therefore, each elder, especially members of the Kingdom Hall Operating Committee and coordinators of maintenance projects, should read and become familiar with *Working Together Safely*. If unsafe work practices or practices that are contrary to the rules and standards presented in this document are observed, immediately share appropriate reminders with the volunteer.—Gal. 6:1.

A key aspect of working safely is identifying potential dangers and then planning how to avoid them. To that end, we are providing the *Congregation Job Hazard Analysis* (DC-85) and *Congregation Job Hazard Analysis Instructions* (DC-85i) forms. These forms will assist those overseeing Kingdom Hall construction and maintenance to review each activity planned, determine the potential hazards related to each task, and take necessary steps to avoid any hazards. These forms are not intended to be used in connection with minor maintenance work and regular cleaning.

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Elders and others assigned to oversee Kingdom Hall maintenance should also reacquaint themselves with the forms *Incident Report (TO-5)* and *Incident Report Instructions (TO-5i)*. Understanding the importance of reporting incidents is critical to maintaining a safe work environment.

You may have questions or face challenges on how to implement certain rules, such as those relating to fall protection for roof repairs, snow removal, or gutter cleaning. If so, please search out trusted local brothers and sisters who have practical experience in the type of work being planned. It is important that those with whom you consult have a reputation for safe work practices and the habit of implementing published rules and standards. If higher-risk services are required, the decision may be made to contract with a company that has all the necessary safety equipment and sufficient insurance coverage.

We take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for your earnest efforts in caring for your Kingdom Hall in order to bring praise to our heavenly Father. May your love for Jehovah and respect for life move you to promote safe work practices through your speech and example. Please accept an expression of our warm Christian love.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

c: Assembly Hall overseers
Bible school facility overseers
Circuit overseers

PS to Assembly Hall overseers and Bible school facility overseers:

Please be sure that those listed on your organization chart to oversee cleaning and maintenance have copies of and have read the above-mentioned material. At an appropriate time, you should discuss with these brothers how these safety principles will be applied to the facility where you are assigned.