



WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF IRELAND

REGISTERED OFFICE: WATCH TOWER HOUSE, BLACKDITCH, NEWCASTLE, CO. WICKLOW, A63 RF61

TELEPHONE 01 901 0390

LDD:LDG April 13, 2017

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Kingdom Hall Information

Dear Brothers:

1. This letter provides frequently requested information on the maintenance and operation of the Kingdom Hall and should be read in conjunction with the letter to all bodies of elders dated November 1, 2016, Re: Using and Maintaining Kingdom Halls.

2. **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.

3. **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.

4. **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.

5. **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.

6. **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. See letter dated November 1, 2016 pars. 33-35.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. **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.

10. **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. These inspections should be arranged locally. 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.

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

12. **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 of June 30, 2016, regarding Kingdom Hall Fire Safety. A supplier arrangement for P50 foam fire extinguishers is available on jw.org.

13. A potential area of concern in Kingdom Halls is the risk of hand dryers catching fire due to a build-up of dust or debris within the casing. The internal components of hand dryers should periodically be cleaned (especially after renovation works have taken place). If the hand dryer casing is removed, the individual handling this task should be competent to work with electrical equipment and the power isolated. Please note that hand dryers in Kingdom Halls are gradually being phased out and replaced with hand towel dispensers, so no new hand dryers should be purchased. See jw.org for current details of the hand towel dispenser supplier arrangement.

14. **Air Conditioning.** It is a legal requirement that each air conditioning unit should be serviced and leak-tested annually if they contain the amount of refrigerant gas specified on the table below. The service should be done by a competent person (F Gas Engineer with experience). Please follow the instructions received in the letter dated November 1, 2016, paragraphs 10, 11. The records for air conditioning units should be kept for five years. The record log is required to be kept with the equipment and with the service contractor.

REFRIGERANT TYPE (HFC)	LEAK TEST EVERY 12 MONTHS IF BETWEEN
R410A	2.39KG – 23.95KG
R407C	2.81KG – 28.18KG
R22	2.76KG – 27.62KG

15. 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 IRELAND

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 maintenance coordinator and members of the Kingdom Hall Operating Committee.