

# know risk

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## Construction, Repairs and Renovations

Undertaking repairs and building projects is a common activity for churches. There are many risks involved with building projects; listed are some specific issues that could affect your insurance policy.

### Hot work permit system

Hot work is defined as work that generates heat, flame or sparks (welding, grinding, brazing, soldering, cutting etc). The danger arises when work is carried out without thought to the location, surroundings or necessary safety precautions.

A 'hot work permit system' should be implemented which requires those performing hot work to complete a permit before the work commences. Details of the hot work permit system are available in the forms & checklist section of the Ansvar Insurance website.

### Volunteer labour

Using volunteers is one way of reducing the cost of a building project but problems can arise when workers are not competent in the tasks they undertake. Amateur work often results in more expensive repairs being required further down the track.

Furthermore, volunteers are often injured as a result of inexperience with power tools, working at heights and manual handling.

It is essential that volunteers are experienced in the work they undertake and are closely supervised by a safety conscious person.

## Contractor liability controls

Contractors are engaged to perform building work, repairs, servicing of machinery and many other functions. The majority of contractors will be conscientious and careful in their activities but accidents do happen.

Ask to see a contractor's Public Liability and Workers Compensation insurance policy before you let them on site. Check that the Public Liability policy provides at least \$5,000,000 cover and is current at the time the work is undertaken.

## Health and safety obligations

Regardless of whether you are using volunteers, contractors or your own employees, you have an obligation to provide a safe workplace. Consider the following areas:

- Working from heights – ladders, scaffolding etc
- Hazardous substances – asbestos, vapours, fumes
- Manual handling – heavy lifting, repetitive movements
- Electrical safety
- Provision of personal protective equipment

## Construction insurance

When making alterations to an existing building, check your insurance policy to ensure that it covers you for the value of the whole building including the additions. Where your policy does not provide adequate cover, contact Ansvar Insurance to arrange the same.

## In summary

- Do not allocate tasks to inexperienced or untrained volunteers.
- Ensure volunteer workers are supervised by suitably qualified and competent people.
- Implement a Hot Work Permit System and ensure contractors and volunteers comply with it.
- Ensure contractors have their own Public Liability and Workers Compensation insurance.
- Ensure your construction site and work practices are safe.
- Check that your insurance policy covers you for your extensions and renovations.
- Check that your building plans conform to relevant building codes and planning laws.

This material is for information purposes only. It is not intended to give specific legal or risk management advice nor are any suggestions, checklists or action plans intended to include or address all possible risk management exposures or solutions.

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