

BUC GUIDELINES

C9 Food Safety (02/2006)

These notes are offered as guidelines by The Baptist Union Corporation Limited to provide information for Baptist churches.

These notes can never be a substitute for detailed professional advice if there are serious and specific problems, but we hope you will find them helpful.

If you want to ask questions about the leaflets and one of the Baptist Trust Companies are your property trustees, you should contact them. They will do their best to help.

If your church property is in the name of private individuals who act as trustees they may also be able to help.

THE FOOD SAFETY ACT 1990

This Act is the principal source of food safety law and provides wide ranging provisions which are aimed to strengthen and update the law on food safety and consumer protection.

FOOD

Food is very widely defined in the Act and includes drink. Although the Act regulates those who are concerned with the 'sale' of food, sale has an extended meaning as it includes food given away in connection with any entertainment (which includes any social gathering) whether on payment of money or not. It follows from this that almost all churches technically operate a 'food business' and are subject to some of the provisions of the Act and some of the regulations made under it.

REGISTRATION UNDER THE ACT

The idea behind registration is to enable the District Council, which is the authority charged with monitoring and enforcing the proper observance of the Act and regulations, to know what food outlets are operating within its area so that the appropriate level of inspection can be carried out. For example, a church which is registered under the Act simply because it serves teas or coffees after Sunday services will be regarded as a much lower risk than a church which operates a regular meal service, say for the elderly.

WHEN IS REGISTRATION REQUIRED?

Attached to these guidelines is a flow chart which will enable a church to decide whether it is required to register. Registration is with the Environmental Officer of the District Council in which the church operates and is free. Each District Council will make available a helpful selection of leaflets and booklets giving advice on the food safety hygiene regulations which are applicable to the church.

CHURCH PREMISES AND THE REGULATIONS

All the regulations relating to food safety and hygiene, including the condition of premises, particularly kitchen surfaces, kitchen floors, washing up facilities etc will apply to church premises where food is served, whether or not the church is or is not required to be registered under the Food Safety Act. It is therefore sensible when new kitchen facilities are being provided, or existing facilities renovated, that advice is sought from the Food Safety Officer of the District Council so that the facilities comply with the regulations.

FOOD PREPARED IN DOMESTIC PREMISES

Strictly speaking, if food is regularly prepared in domestic premises for use at church functions then those domestic premises will be required to be registered under the Act and will be subject to the appropriate regulations. However, this should not inhibit church members and friends from providing refreshments for use at church functions on an occasional basis.

Whilst there is no legal ban on food which has been prepared at home being brought to the church for consumption or sale basic risk assessments should be carried out. While there would normally be no problem with cakes that do not have high risk ingredients, such as fresh cream, there may be a degree of risk with other foods and it may be safer to avoid bringing these in from home. Such items might be better prepared on church premises or bought in from commercial sources.

FOOD HYGIENE and TRAINING FOR FOOD HANDLERS

Where the church operates any significant catering operations it is sensible for all volunteers to be asked to read the appropriate leaflet available from the District Council on basic food hygiene rules. If a church volunteer, or a paid worker, is responsible for catering it is advisable that this person takes a basic course in food hygiene, details of which can be obtained from the District Council. Certainly the person in charge of the church catering should be familiar with the food hygiene regulations. These regulations deal particularly with the correct temperature for hot and cold food and the required separation of cold and cooked meats.

PENALTIES

A breach of the Act or the regulations could result in a criminal conviction. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. If the regulations are breached, through perhaps a temporary oversight, if it can be shown that the church has acted with 'due diligence' there should be a good defence. This defence would not be available to the church if all reasonable care had not been taken to avoid the particular offence.

ENFORCEMENT

The Act gives Enforcement Officers power to close unsatisfactory premises or to require improvements to be made. If, therefore, church premises do not comply with the regulations an improvement notice may be issued specifying what is required to put matters right. If the work is not done, or if there has been a successful prosecution for breaching the regulations and there is danger to the public, the premises may be subject to a Prohibition Order.

2006 FOOD HYGIENE REGULATIONS

On 1 January 2006 food hygiene legislation changed across Europe. The new regulations consolidate and simplify the existing legislation and most requirements have not changed. The main change is the need for some food operations to have a documented food safety management system. The amount of documentation will depend on the size and nature of the operation. Activities such as the occasional preparation of food by individuals or groups for gatherings or for sale at charitable events are excluded. For more regular 'low' risk activities where food is brought onto church premises simplified procedures and record keeping should suffice.

A food safety management procedure requires that:

- hazards to food safety which might be present are identified;
- controls are in place to deal with these hazards;
- controls are carried out and if something does go wrong it is clear what should be done to rectify the problem;
- procedures are kept up to date;

- documents are kept to demonstrate what the procedures are;
- records are kept to show that procedures are working.

Detailed advice on food safety management from the Food Standards Agency can be found at www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/hygiene/sfbb. More general information is available from the Food Standards Agency website www.food.gov.uk or from your local environmental health department.

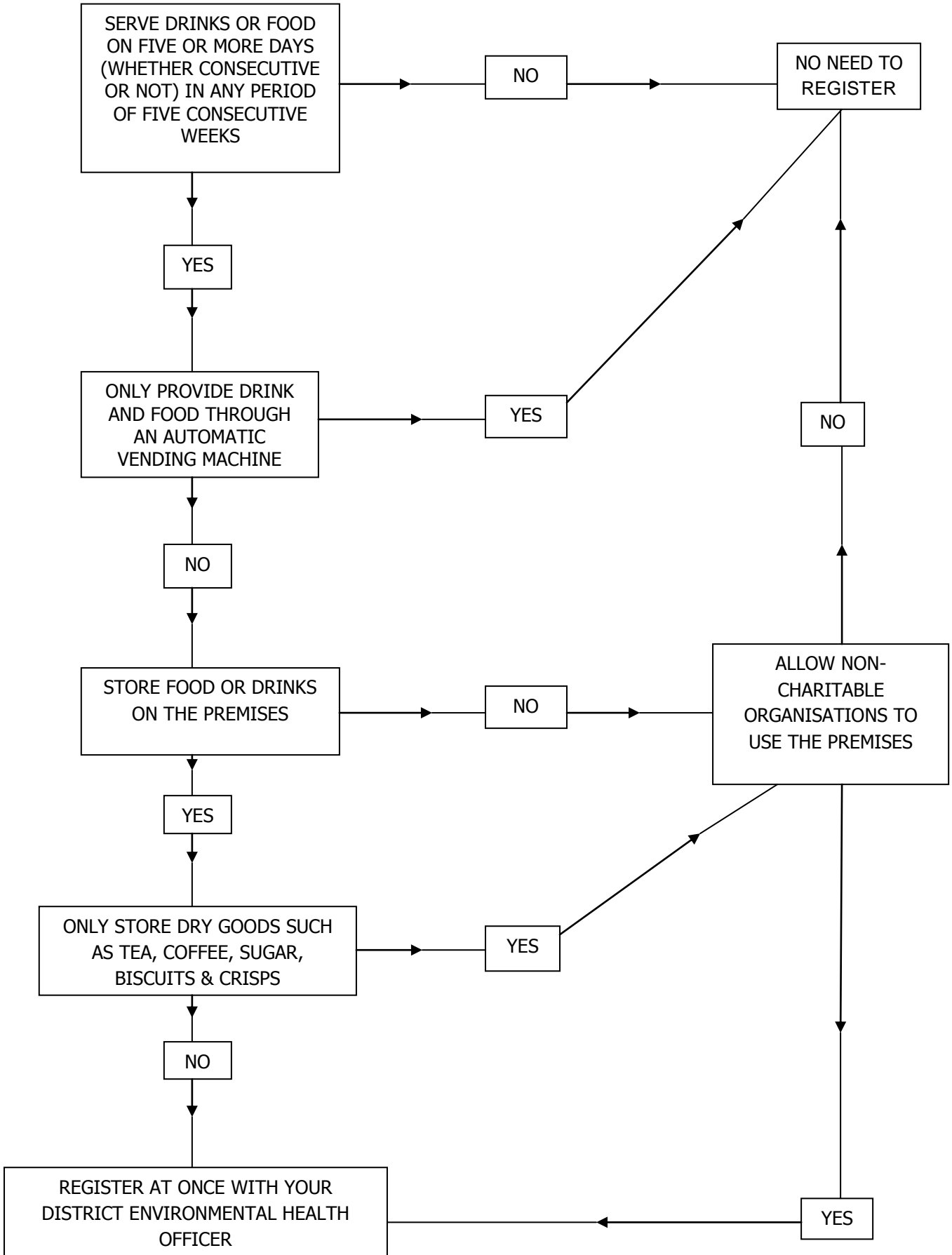
HEALTH and SAFETY AT WORK ACT

Reference should be made to guidelines leaflet *C7 Health & Safety and Fire Precautions* which sets out when church premises are subject to the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the appropriate regulations.

PLANNING PERMISSION

Church premises do not normally require Planning Permission for serving food which is 'ancillary' to ordinary church or social activities. However, if a regular coffee bar or restaurant is operated from church premises this might well require Planning Permission. Any alterations to the building may also require Building Regulation Approval.

DO YOU?



Association Trust Company	Contact
Baptist Union Corporation Ltd	Baptist Union Corporation Ltd Baptist House PO Box 44 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8RT Telephone: 01235 517700
East Midlands Baptist Trust Company Ltd	The Baptist Union Corporation Ltd Baptist House PO Box 44 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8RT Telephone: 01235 517700
Heart of England Baptist Association	Heart of England Baptist Association BMS International Mission Centre 24 Weoley Park Road Selly Oak Birmingham B29 6QX Telephone: 0121 472 4986
London Baptist Property Board	London Baptist Association 235 Shaftesbury Avenue London WC2H 8EP Telephone: 020 7692 5592
North West Baptist Association	Baptist Union Corporation Ltd Baptist House PO Box 44 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8RT Telephone: 01235 517700
South West Baptist Trust Corporation	South West Baptist Trust Corporation Wonford Baptist Chapel 36-38 Wonford Street Exeter Devon EX2 5DL Telephone: 01392 433533
West of England Baptist Association	West of England Baptist Association The Old Forge Broom Hill Stapleton Bristol BS16 1DN Telephone: 0117 965 8828
Yorkshire Baptist Association	The Baptist Union Corporation Ltd Baptist House PO Box 44 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8RT Telephone: 01235 517700

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This is one of a series of *Guidelines* that are offered as a resource for Baptist ministers and churches. They have been prepared by the Baptist Union Corporation Limited and are, of necessity, intended only to give very general advice in relation to the topics covered. These guidelines should not be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific and more detailed advice in relation to a particular matter.

The staff at the Baptist Union Corporation, at Baptist House (or your regional Trust Company) will be very pleased to answer your queries and help in any way possible. It helps us to respond as efficiently as possible to the many churches in trust with us if you write to us and set out your enquiry as simply as possible.

The Baptist Union Corporation staff also deal with churches that are in trust with the East Midland Baptist Trust Company Limited, the North Western Baptist Association (Incorporated), and Yorkshire Baptist Association.

If your holding trustees are one of the other Baptist Trust Corporations you must contact your own Trust Corporation for further advice. A list of contact details has been included.

If you have private trustees they too should be consulted as appropriate.

Contact Address and Registered Office:

The Baptist Union Corporation Ltd, Baptist House, PO Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 8RT England

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