



Health & Safety working at church

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The big health & safety stick has well and truly been beaten to shreds. New Zealand's Health & Safety at Work Act (HSWA) became law on April 4th 2016. The intent is good; everyone is engaged in keeping those we love and honour, safe. We understand that if, as a church, we have paid staff, we are a 'person conducting a business undertaking' (PCBU) and therefore subject to the HSWA. We are taking it all seriously; we have a mountain of health & safety information, online tools, and workshops to help us become compliant with the HSWA. For many churches the question now is:

How do we implement a 'fit for purpose' health & safety system in our church?

Recently a church administrator from the North Island asked me the same question. Here are some approaches your church may consider.....

Change your mind-set! We can be the best!

We have the opportunity and access to the best heaven governance practises and processes. We are also well positioned in our communities to demonstrate and testify His love for us by how we actively keep everyone in our workplace safe as is reasonable practicable.

When pastors and staff are already at resource capacity

The reality is we need to make 'room' for engaging in our duty of care. It won't go away; it will require ongoing engagement and our law doesn't allow us to delegate the responsibility elsewhere. The perception is 'we can't afford it' or 'it's too hard'. Those gifted with administration/governance will say 'how can we afford it' and 'what does it look like'. Be smart.....

What existing resources can we leverage?

It's much easier to add one step to an existing 'business as usual' process than create a whole new task or activity. Whether it's your technology, communication pipelines, team meetings, employing short term expertise from another member church.

Progressively implement your health & safety plan in manageable stages

Lead from the top of your church organisation, your Trustees and senior leaders have the responsibility to exercise due diligence to ensure the church organisation complies with its health & safety duties and obligations. Ricki-Lee from Teague Consulting NZ can assist churches with a six stage health & safety implementation plan designed for churches.

