

County property guidance

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1. Introduction

This booklet is intended to support all those who have responsibility for a guiding property in Scotland. It is relevant to all properties, whether owned or leased (alone or jointly); including (but not limited to) halls, campsites, residential accommodation, and outdoor centres.

If you are a member of a Property Management Committee (PMC) (please see section 3 for details of who the PMC are) or a commissioner with a property in your patch, this booklet is for you! In each district, division, or county where there is a guiding property, this is probably the biggest asset and potentially the biggest risk, however it is hoped that the information on the following pages will guide you through the tasks that need to be considered in order to comply with the wide range of legislation, and to fulfil Girlguiding's expectations regarding property management.

This booklet has been designed to help and support you. Checklists and templates have been included in the appendices to enable you to undertake and record necessary checks. Links have also been included to useful websites which will give a more detailed explanation of compliance requirements.

The Girlguiding Scotland County Property Support Group can also help. You can contact us on property@girlguiding-scot.org.uk or get peer support through our Facebook group; [Girlguiding Scotland Property Network](#).

2. Ownership of property and the property trustees

Girlguiding Scotland would recommend that all properties (owned or leased) are held by the county, however we are aware that this is not always the case. Whichever level the property is held at, the county executive should be kept up to date with regard to the management of the property and an annual report should be submitted to them (please see section 3. The Property Management Committee for more information). As all guiding entities are unincorporated bodies, any property (owned freehold or leased) must be held on behalf of the county, by named property trustees. It would be expected that the property trustees comprise the following:

- The county commissioner
- The county treasurer
- The relevant division or district commissioner

The property trustees should be listed (by role) in your County Constitution and this should be mapped against the names and roles contained within the title deeds. If there are discrepancies, please contact the County Property Support group (property@girlguiding-scot.org.uk).

These role holders would need to register that they hold the property on the Land Register of Scotland. You can find out more here: www.ros.gov.uk/our-registers/land-register-of-scotland. As these post holders change, the listing should be updated. This should be included in the induction of new county commissioners.

It may also be required to register other members of the county executive as associates on the Register of people holding a controlled interest in land (RCI). You can find out more about this here: <http://www.ros.gov.uk/our-registers/register-of-persons-holding-a-controlled-interest-in-land-rci>.

It would be expected that the county executive delegate responsibility for the day to day running of the property to a Property Management Committee (PMC), which has a written terms of reference and is covered by the county's scheme of delegated authority. You can find more information about the Property Management Committee in section 3 and a template terms of reference in [Appendix 1](#).

For more advice about title deeds and who the property trustees should be, please get in touch with the County Property Support Group on property@girlguiding-scot.org.uk.

3. The Property Management Committee

A Property Management Committee (PMC) should be formed to deal with the day-to-day management and administration of the land and / or buildings for which it has responsibility. This group may currently be known as the Management Group or Committee or the Board of Trustees, FOG etc. If this is the case, we would recommend that this terminology is updated as per this guidance. In the case of very small sites the management function may be fulfilled by the district, division, or county executive committee.

The PMC must have formal, written Terms of Reference (ToR) held by the county. You can find a template terms of reference for a PMC at [Appendix 1](#).

It is also important to note that the PMC is not a charity in its own right and members of a PMC are not 'charity trustees' merely by virtue of being a member of the *-PMC. The PMC is simply a sub-committee of the Girlguiding county, division or district and it is therefore the county, division or district (where registered with OSCR) which is the relevant charity.

The relevant county / division / district commissioner is responsible for appointing a chair of the PMC; who may then appoint a vice chair. Other members of the committee with relevant knowledge or skills according to the nature of the property, will be appointed by the PMC and ratified by the district / division / county, as per the terms of reference. PMCs should appoint a member who has financial experience; e.g., setting budgets, future plans and financial targets, and members who can represent the interests of property users. As Girlguiding is a youth organisation, it is considered to be good practice to include young members on the committee. If this isn't possible then the PMC should ensure that they engage with young members regularly to ensure that their views and needs are taken into account.

The PMC is responsible for making sure that the key functions set out in the PMC terms of reference are adhered to.

The PMC should also compile an annual report, to be submitted along with the annual accounts to the county executive. A template for an annual report is available at [Appendix 2](#).

4. Managing Risk – Risk Assessment & Risk Logs

Risk Assessment is taking a common-sense approach to the management of risk associated with your property and it’s intended use. All properties must have a detailed risk log, a copy of which must be submitted to the county as part of your Annual Property Report (an example Risk log is included at [Appendix 3](#)). For further advice about property risk assessments please see: [Health and safety guidance | Girlguiding](#)

Risk logs

A risk log is a way of documenting all identified risks so that they can be effectively managed and monitored. They are also used to ensure that the necessary actions are put in place to mitigate any risks that have been identified.

How to use the risk log

The log comprises the following risk categories:

1. Finance
2. Governance
3. Operational
4. Safeguarding and compliance
5. External
6. Regulatory

These are recorded under different tabs on the excel spreadsheet.

For each category you should consider any potential risks and complete the schedule.

The columns to be completed are:

Risk area	A description of what the risk is and what any outcomes would be
Likelihood (L)	How likely is it the risk will occur
Impact (I)	If the risk did occur how would it impact the County
Inherent Risk (IH)	Calculated based on L X I (the spreadsheet does this automatically)
Controls	Record any controls in place to manage the Inherent Risk
Likelihood (L)	Rescore the likelihood taking into account the controls
Impact (I)	Rescore the impact taking into account the controls
Managed Risk (MR)	Calculated based on L x I (the spreadsheet does this automatically)
Actions [YEAR]	Record any action to be taken during the year to address the risk
Who	Record who will carry out these actions
Review	Record when the risk will be reviewed
Comments	Add any additional information that may be helpful when reviewing the log

The likelihood of a risk occurring should be rated from 1–5 and entered into the 'L' column:

Score	Description	Chance of occurrence
1	Rare	Very little evidence to assume this event would happen – will only happen in exceptional circumstances
2	Unlikely	Not expected to happen, but definite potential exists – unlikely to occur
3	Possible	Has happened before on occasions – reasonable chance of occurring
4	Likely	Strong possibility that this could occur – likely to occur
5	Almost certain	This is expected to occur frequently / in most circumstances

The impact of the risk should then be rated 1 – 5 as below and entered into the 'I' column:

Score	Description
1	Negligible
2	Minor
3	Moderate
4	Major
5	Extreme

Once the scores have been calculated for the Inherent Risk (IR) and the Managed Risk (MR) they should each be assigned a colour as follows:

Green	Score between 1 – 15	The risk is low
Amber	Score between 16 – 19	The risk is medium
Red	Score 20 or above	The risk is high

This colour coding will allow the PMC and county executive to identify the high and medium risks and prioritise managing these. You may wish to re-order the individual risks into colour order on one page (by copy and pasting) to see at a glance the highest priority risk.

5. Health and safety

The PMC have overall responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers, young members, employees, visitors, members of the public and contractors who visit or work on the premises.

In the interests of health and safety, Girlguiding aims to:

- Ensure that all volunteers young members, employees, visitors, members of the public and contractors receive adequate information, instruction and training for the evacuation of the premises in the event of fire or other emergency.
- Investigate any accident occurring on Girlguiding sites; to analyse its cause and to take any corrective action.
- Provide all volunteers, employees, visitors, members of the public and contractors with the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to work safely and efficiently
- Ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, any plant, machinery or equipment provided for use is safe in its operation.

You can find a helpful overall health and safety checklist at [Appendix 4](#).

Accident notification and investigation

If an accident or incident occurs on a Girlguiding premises, an adult member must complete a [Notification of accident or incident form](#) as soon as possible and send it to; insurancesupport@girlguiding.org.uk. You should also contact the appropriate Commissioner as soon as possible and brief her fully on the situation.

Copies of this paperwork should be kept until the submission to Girlguiding has been acknowledged, at which point it should be appropriately destroyed in line with GDPR. A basic log of the nature of accidents and lessons learned should be kept. A template for this can be found at [Appendix 5](#).

RIDDOR

RIDDOR stands for 'Reporting Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013' Under these regulations, if you are an employer or the person in control of the premises when an accident occurs, you have a duty to report certain serious incidents and accidents. See the [RIDDOR accident reporting requirements](#) for full details.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002

These regulations cover all 'chemicals' used or stored on the site. This includes any substance which is hazardous to the health of volunteers, young members, employees, visitors, members of the public and contractors. The PMC must ensure that a COSHH risk assessment is carried out for all substances hazardous to health, and that guidance for their safe use is provided. You can tell if a substance is hazardous to health as it will have on it one or more of the COSHH symbols below.



For further information go to: [How to carry out a COSHH risk assessment](#)

Wherever there are chemicals stored or used, the premises must have a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each substance listed in their COSHH assessment. SDSs are usually available from the supplier of the substance and / or on their website.

Managing electrical systems and equipment

Electrical Safety at Work Regulations (1989)

These regulations are far-reaching and applicable to places of work. However, it is recommended that this legislation is followed for all premises as good practice.

The key point of the regulations is that the PMC is responsible for ensuring that all electrical systems are maintained, so far as is reasonably practicable, to avoid danger to all who use the site.

The PMC has a duty of maintenance under the regulations. The only practical way to meet this is through regular inspections and testing which should be recorded.

The fixed wiring installation should be inspected at least every 5 years by a qualified electrician – either belonging to [SELECT](#) (the trade association for the electrical contracting industry in Scotland) or the [National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting \(NICEIC\)](#) who will provide a condition report. Exactly how often the testing should be undertaken depends on its age and likelihood of damage. A recommendation with regard to frequency will be given by the electrician after the first inspection.

When it comes to testing your electrical equipment (known as 'Portable Appliance Testing'), doing your own simple yearly check just by carefully examining the equipment for damage and checking it works, will usually be sufficient. For all small items, users should be reminded to check before use. You can find out more on the [HSE Portable Appliance Testing \(PAT\) FAQs](#).

You can find out more about managing and maintaining electrical systems and equipment here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity>.

Asbestos

Asbestos can be found in any building built (or refurbished) prior to the year 2000, if this applies to a premises, the PMC must ensure they have an Asbestos Management Survey undertaken by an authorised surveyor. This is a one-off survey must be made available to all contractors and volunteers undertaking any subsequent repair and maintenance work.

An Asbestos Refurbishment and Demolition Survey is required prior to any part of the building being demolished or intrusive upgrading or refurbishment work being undertaken. This survey will advise of any asbestos that will require to be removed prior to work commencing. This removal work must be undertaken by a licensed contractor.

You can get more information about asbestos and how to manage it here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/>

Trees

Visual inspection of wooded areas and trees should be carried out on a regular basis and particularly after severe weather. If your property has mature trees, you should consider adding this to your risk assessment.

Fire

Most fires are preventable. Therefore, the PMC should seek to avoid them by taking responsibility for and adopting an appropriate approach and procedures.

As good practice all premises should have:

- Clearly signed and unobstructed fire exits which can easily be opened.
- Firefighting equipment compliant with the latest regulations and tested.
- Means of raising alarm (e.g., a whistle, bell or automatic alarm system).
- Documented and displayed evacuation procedures.
- Clearly marked assembly points.
- Fire notices displayed as appropriate to show fire exits, assembly points and means of contacting fire and other emergency authorities.

It is the responsibility of the PMC to ensure that these are all in place.

It is recommended that an evacuation practice should be held on arrival at a residential site and at least annually at a Guide Hall.

The PMC should also ensure that:

- All fire safety equipment is regularly checked and maintained and logged.
- All fire escape routes are kept clear/have correct signage/have correct exit doors and locks.
- Any staff and volunteers are regularly trained in basic fire safety/that visitors are informed.

Fire risk assessment

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the associated Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006, require that employers (including volunteer involving organisations) carry out regular fire risk assessments. It is therefore the responsibility of the PMC to ensure that there is a 'suitable and sufficient' fire risk assessment of the premises. The [fire risk assessment](#) must be undertaken by a "competent person". Please see an example fire risk assessment [here](#). It is recommended that in the first instance a local firm is contacted to undertake a fire risk assessment, although the [Scottish Fire and Rescue Service](#) may give some initial advice.

A fire risk assessment is a structured look at the hazards and management of fire on the premises. There are five steps in the assessment process:

Step 1: Identify fire hazards.

Step 2: Identify people at risk from the fire hazards.

Step 3: Evaluate the risk, remove or reduce it and protect those at risk.

Step 4: Record what you have done. Plan how you will inform those who use the site.

Step 5: Review the assessment periodically (at least annually) to keep it up to date.

Maintenance of fire safety equipment

Here are some key considerations for maintenance of fire safety equipment:

- Your fire extinguishers should be serviced every year by a qualified contractor. After 5-10 years you may need to replace your extinguishers, but this will depend on the environment you keep them in.
- At least every month, you need to check extinguishers are in place, at the correct pressure, their locking pins are intact and their tamper seals are unbroken.
- Your fire detection and alarm systems should be serviced every six months by a qualified contractor, like an electrician. Depending on the system's size, it may need servicing every three months. You should test it's working once a week, setting it off from different places to make sure it's working fully.
- Sprinkler systems, if you have one, need to be serviced every year.

- Gas suppressant and gas automatic shut-off systems should be serviced every year, along with smoke extractors.
- You should give your fire doors a formal check every six months, and more often if they're used heavily. After a fire alarm test, you'll need to check doors which close automatically to make sure they've worked properly.
- Test your emergency lighting, if you have it, every month.

Gas cylinders

It is important that gas cylinders are stored and operated safely. The manufacturer's instructions must always be carefully followed.

Storage

Gas cylinders must be stored in locked cages. These must be checked during regular site visits (minimum quarterly) to ensure that they are secure and free from rust.

There are some other considerations that should be given to storage of gas cylinders:

- Always store gas cylinders in the upright (vertical) position. Never store them horizontally (this could cause a leak).
- Always display safety and operating notices prominently.
- Never store gas cylinders in the presence of a naked flame.
- Never store below ground level, as any leakage will collect at low levels. Instead, safe storage should be in a well-ventilated area (preferably outdoors)

Using gas cylinders

There are some basic safety rules when using gas cylinders. The PMC should ensure that these are displayed near to the storage site or usage area of cylinders. Relevant staff and volunteers should also receive training on safe use of gas cylinders.

Basic safety rules when using gas cylinders:

- Don't use gas cylinders in the horizontal position. They could leak, which can be very serious. Always ensure the cylinder is in a stable, upright position.
- Always replace safety caps/plugs when the gas cylinder is empty or not in use.
- Don't use propane cylinders indoors. They have a higher pressure than butane cylinders, so they're not suitable for indoor use.
- Don't change gas cylinders in the presence of naked flames.
- Always pay attention to any safety and operating notices displayed in the vicinity.
- A gas cylinder might seem empty but could still contain LPG vapour; you should treat all LPG gas cylinders as if they were full.

Manual handling

The PMC must ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that staff and volunteers do not undertake manual handling operations where there is a risk of personal injury.

If manual handling of heavy objects cannot be avoided, the PMC should risk assess the tasks and take action to mitigate any identified risks.

Good practice with regard to handling heavy objects would include:

- Providing devices for moving heavy loads, e.g., trolleys for moving tents/equipment.
- Marking heavy equipment such as tents with a 'heavy load' sign.
- Providing training in safe manual handling.

More information about manual handling and the Manual Handling Regulations (1992) can be found here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/manual-handling/>

Work at Height

The Work at Height Regulations (2005) cover employees carrying out work at height above ground level. Girlguiding recommends that sites without staff follow the Work at Height Regulations as good practice.

The PMC is responsible for taking measures to avoid falling accidents (people or objects falling from height). Where work at height cannot be avoided, a risk assessment of the activities must be carried out, training should be provided and appropriate access equipment used, e.g., ladders or platforms.

External contractors

The PMC should ensure that any contractors engaged to carry out work within premises are adequately insured, and have the necessary skills, qualifications and certification.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)

The PMC will need to comply with the WEEE Regulations if it becomes necessary to dispose of waste that falls under the regulations: [Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment \(WEEE\)](#).

The most likely to affect Girlguiding premises are:

- Large household appliances
- Small household appliances
- IT and telecommunications equipment
- Computer equipment

Water

From sinks, toilets and showers to hot water tanks, you need to maintain all your water systems, not only to make sure you have good quality water, but also to stop bacteria like Legionella developing.

Legionella can make people very ill; it can even be fatal. It's often transferred in water, especially in water systems that aren't properly maintained. To keep your water clean, your first step should be to do a risk assessment. Doing a legionella risk assessment and

putting together a management plan is quite complex, so you should use a [UKAS](#) accredited contractor. The contractor will recommend you do weekly or monthly checks for legionella. Part of these weekly/monthly checks will be testing water temperatures (more guidance about this is included in the Health & Safety Checklist at [Appendix 4](#)). This 12 should only need to be done once every two years. However, if there are lots of problems you may need to repeat it every year until your systems are in good order.

It is important to check water systems, particularly following any period of non-use.

Food hygiene

The PMC should consider any relevant implications of the Food Safety Act (1990), this will be particularly relevant to premises that provide kitchen and cooking facilities. Please refer to [Appendix 6](#) for guidance.

CCTV

If the property has or is considering the use of CCTV then the PMC must ensure that they comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Details information and guidance regarding the use of CCTV can be found here: [Guidance on CCTV | Girlguiding](#)

6. Property maintenance and improvement

The PMC should establish a planned preventative maintenance schedule (PPMS). This will help to ensure that properties are safe and suitable for use but planning preventative maintenance will also help to reduce the need for emergency repairs, which may be more expensive and inconvenient.

A template PPMS is included at [Appendix 7](#). There is an example PPMS at [Appendix 7a](#); this contains suggestions of the sorts of things that should be included.

It may be necessary to seek expert advice to establish what work needs to be undertaken to maintain your property and comply with any regulations. This will vary depending on the age and type of the property, as well as the construction type and use.

As well as being undertaken at the beginning of any term of ownership or long-term lease, the PPMS should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis (at least annually) with estimates sought and potential costs included which will assist with budgeting. Buildings should be inspected on a regular basis, any defects recorded, and reparative action taken.

It is considered good practice to keep a record of required and completed maintenance work.

Depending on the nature of the property, the PMC may also be required to assess any potential environmental hazards. Refer to [Appendix 8](#) for guidance.

Should the PMC feel that there are sufficient funds or need to extend, make substantial improvements to, or build a new property this should be first fully discussed with the county executive. The New build / extension checklist should then be completed and sent to Girlguiding Scotland's Property Support Team for approval, please see [Appendix 9](#) for more information.

7. Insurance

It is very important that all Girlguiding premises have the necessary insurance cover in place. This should cover the buildings, any equipment and the people who visit or are employed at the site.

Girlguiding provides:

- [Public Liability Insurance](#)
- [Employer's Liability Insurance](#)
- [Personal accident and medical insurance](#)

These policies are downloadable from the website. Up to date copies of the insurance certificates MUST be displayed publicly in your property or site.

You can find out more about Girlguiding provided insurance and other insurances that you should consider here: [Insurance | Girlguiding](#)

What insurance policies does the site need to take out?

Buildings insurance

All buildings must have buildings insurance in place. If the property is leased, you must check whether it is you or the landlord who is responsible for insuring the building.

It is important that you do not underestimate the cover that you require for your building & that you are insured against all necessary risks; this would include the cost of rebuilding the property if it was damaged or destroyed, including demolition costs, professional fees (planning consultants/architect's and legal fees) and the cost of materials, labour & VAT. There have been instances where a guiding property was not able to be completely restored after a fire because the building was under insured. It is therefore important to review your buildings insurance each year & make sure that you have the right level of cover.

Contents insurance

You don't have to have contents insurance; the PMC should assess whether this is required based on the nature and value of the contents. This should be reviewed regularly. It is important to note that contents are not covered by any Girlguiding insurance policies.

Girlguiding insurance partners

You are not required to use any specific insurance company or broker, as long as the cover is adequate. Unity Insurance services is Girlguiding's insurance partner, and offer a range of insurance products including buildings and contents policies. You can find out more about Unity's products here: [Unity Insurance Services: Girlguiding Insurance](#)

Hiring to non-guiding groups

If you are hiring out your property/campsite to non-guiding groups, they MUST sign a Hirer's agreement confirming that they have their own insurance.

You can find out more about hiring your property here, including an example hirer's agreement: [Hiring out your hall | Girlguiding](#)

8. Non-guiding groups' use of guiding properties

Girlguiding is proud of the trust that parents have in our organisation and this trust is very important to us all. The challenge for the PMCs of many guiding properties is that they cannot be financially viable with income solely from guiding groups and often have to take bookings from schools, youth groups, DofE groups and other organisations to supplement their income.

The challenge is how to accommodate non-guiding and guiding groups without compromising the trust that our young members' parents have in our organisation and the safeguarding track record of which we are proud. Youth groups such as DofE, Scouts and schools do have their own safeguarding policies similar to Girlguiding, including membership of the PVG scheme, therefore bookings from such groups can be accepted at the same time as guiding bookings. Other non-guiding groups would generally only be accepted during periods when guiding groups are not in attendance. Every booking (guiding and non-guiding) should be risk-assessed with particular consideration given to whether the premises is a hall or a residential facility.

It should be noted that any adult sharing the same residential facilities as young members, must have completed the volunteer recruitment and vetting process, including membership of the PVG scheme and completion of A Safe Space level 1 and level 2. In practice this will mean that this is unusual, for an adult who is not a Girlguiding volunteer to be at a facility at the same time as a guiding group.

PMCs should ensure that a procedure is in place for notifying groups (guiding and non guiding) of other group bookings with overlapping dates or times.

Find out more about hiring out a guiding property here: [Hiring out your hall | Girlguiding](#)

Here you'll find an example hirer's agreement for one-off external hires (such as for a birthday party): [hirers-agreement.pdf \(girlguiding.org.uk\)](#)

And here you'll find an example hirer's agreement for regular external hires: [hirers-agreement-regular-hirings-2022.pdf \(girlguiding.org.uk\)](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1	Template property management committee terms of reference
Appendix 2	Template annual property report
Appendix 3	Example property risk log
Appendix 4	Health and safety checklist
Appendix 5	Accident and incident log
Appendix 6	Food hygiene
Appendix 7	Template PPMS
Appendix 7a	Example PPMS
Appendix 8	Environmental hazards
Appendix 9	New build or extension checklist