

HEATING SYSTEMS

Heating Churches during Lockdown



Churches that are currently closed for public worship may be wondering what sort of heating regime they should adopt until more regular use of the building resumes.

The Church Buildings Team with input from the DAC Heating Adviser has drawn together the following guidance, particularly for churches with wet heating systems.

The following should help PCC's make informed decisions around the use of their heating, based upon their local context.

What should be done to address the main concern of the risk of water pipes freezing and bursting?

- check to ensure that the frost thermostat is working and set correctly. The normal setting would be between 4 to 7 °C. (This assumes that the heating is available in the area where other water services are installed.)
- on larger churches where the boiler output is greater than approx. 100kW, consideration should be given to a two-stage frost protection. Stage one would operate the heating pump to circulate the water round the system when the temperature drops to around 7°C, the boilers would then operate at stage two if the temperature dropped to around 4°C.

What do insurance companies typically recommend?

Whilst not the only provider of insurance for churches, EIG currently say: *We recognise it may not always be appropriate to turn off or drain down water systems. Where this is the case a minimum temperature of 7°C (45°F) should be maintained within the property if possible.*

See: <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/unoccupied-properties-during-covid-19/church/>

Do we need to heat the fabric of the church even if we are not using the building?

In ideal circumstances, the fabric of the building benefits from being maintained at a constant temperature. Historic England suggests that the range for this is between 8-10°C (46-50°F). However, it is recognised that this may not be financially sustainable in all circumstances.

See: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/places-of-worship/making-changes-to-your-place-of-worship/advice-by-topic/heating/>

Other Considerations:

Given the financial pressure that churches are under, a sensible and pragmatic approach to the above guidance is recommended. It is also important to ensure to check that gutters, gullies, drains etc are all working well to ensure that damp/water is not causing issues in the first place.

Guidance on [Maintenance Plans](#) is available on the Diocesan Website: www.leicester.anglican.org

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