

Summary Guidance on Risk Assessment.
Church Bell Ringing and Covid-19.

Essential reading:

<https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/>

<https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/how-bell-ringers-are-assessing-risk/>

There are other linked pages on the Central Council site, the link to the Church of England site is also essential reading:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches#na>

Both the Central Council and the Church of England sites are regularly updated with the latest information on COVID-19 and its impact on ringing. Your risk assessment should be regularly reviewed and updated. A version control is a good way to record the fact that you have carried out the review/ update. Here's an example of a version control and the sort of information you could record there:

Date	Version	Commentary
19.06.2020	2.0	Initial draft. ⇒ V1. Previously circulated to band members for consultation.
28.06.2020	2.1	Review and update following Central Council of Church Bell Ringers ("CCCBR") guidance "return to service ringing". ⇒ 15 minute ringing session timings updated. ⇒ V2.1 Circulated to Tower Captain and Secretary for consultation.
30.06.2020	2.2	Review and update following Gov. guidance on places of worship published 29 th June. ⇒ 48 hour quarantine period for books noted. (Suggest ropes may be same but no amendments made) ⇒ Advice for those in contact with someone who becomes ill now direct copied into this doc. Incl. link to further guidance ⇒ Over 70's and clinically very vulnerable & shielding guidance links added.
01.07.2020	2.3	Review and update following Church of England updated (30 th June) advice, based on CCCBR Guidance agreed with Church of England Recovery Group. ⇒ Attendance records to be kept to assist Track and Trace if required. ⇒ Travelling to and from the church to be considered. ⇒ Further info for ringers who may have been in contact with a ringer who becomes ill in the tower.
14.07.2020	2.4	Review and update further to Public Health England's clearance of the CCCBR Guidance. ⇒ V2.4 Circulated to Parish Priest for consultation 15.07.20
26.07.2020	2.5	Update following feedback from Parish Priest. ⇒ Cleaning of downstairs belfry door handle added. ⇒ Church have confirmed handwashing facilities will not be available.
01.08.2020	2.6	Update following PM's announcement 31.07.20 and subsequent C of E and CCCBR updates.

		⇒ Face coverings will be mandatory in places of worship from 8 th August.
07.08.2020	2.7	Review and update following face coverings now mandatory. (Gov “places of worship” and CCCBR) ⇒ Face coverings now a legal requirement in place of worship. ⇒ All hyperlinks tested, minor alteration to accompanying text on introductory page.
15.08.2020	2.8	Small update following CCCBR weekly update. ⇒ Further tightening of rules on face coverings. ⇒ Page numbering added.
21.08.2020	2.8	Review following CofE and CCCBR weekly updates. ⇒ NO CHANGES to this RA – same version number applies.
27.08.2020	2.8	Noted the following: ⇒ CofE website now has specific FAQ “Can church bells be rung”: This appears to be the only change. Link to CCCBR gives same detail last updated 21 st Aug, with no changes to the detail. ⇒ NO CHANGES to this RA – same version number applies.
04.09.2020	2.8	No changes from CofE or CCCBR. No changes to this RA, same version number.
12.09.2020	2.9	Review following changed CCCBR guidance. ⇒ The period of time between ringing sessions has been reduced from 72 hours to 48 hours.
19.09.2020	2.10	Review following Birmingham local restrictions and Government’s “Rule of Six” legislation. ⇒ New section inserted re. numbers of people gathering.

The Central Council has generated a risk assessment template recommended for ringers to use. This is available as a download and is available at the first CCCBR link above.

Completing this document in a chronological manner may be helpful – mentally walk through what happens when you go ringing, starting with how you travel to the tower, access to the tower, who has keys, use of the rope spider, opening windows, access to hand washing facilities or sanitizer, touching of light switches and furniture. It should all be covered right up to exiting the tower and locking up.

Here are a few generic answers to “what is the hazard?” and some control measures which may get you started thinking about your own tower:

What is the hazard?	Control measures.
Spread of Covid 19 at the tower	Face coverings are mandatory from 8 th August 2020 in places of worship. (CCCBR guidance, C of E guidance and UK Gov instruction.) Anyone who is unable to wear a face covering should not ring.

	<p>Each person is required to declare any Covid 19 symptoms, however mild, however close to the appointed meet time, and stay away from the tower altogether.</p> <p>If a ringer has come into contact with another person with Covid 19 they must stay away and self isolate in line with NHS guidance.</p> <p><i>You may like to include links to further information like this:</i></p> <p>No ringer is to feel pressured into doing anything they are not personally comfortable doing. Each person's own risk appetite is different, based on their own assessment. Ringers over 70 (further guidance at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing) or extremely clinically vulnerable or shielding (further guidance at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19) Should very carefully assess their position.</p>
<p><u>Touching surfaces:</u> Keys, doors & light switches.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Downstairs key holder will be appointed for each ringing session. They will open the downstairs door and switch on the light, then step to the side allowing 2 below; 2. Upstairs key holder will be appointed for each ringing session. They will be the first person to ascend the tower, open the upstairs door, switch on the light, operate the rope spider, confirm all windows are open.
	<p><i>Going through things chronologically will prompt you to cover the whole event. Opening the doors leads to....</i></p>
<p>Breach of social distancing on the staircase</p>	<p>Downstairs key holder to assist in regulating the entry of ringers into the staircase to maintain social distance.</p>
	<p><i>Don't forget to cover the "what if" situations; things that could reasonably happen, even if they don't always happen:</i></p>
<p>Unexpected visiting ringers arrive.</p>	<p>Unexpected ringers will be declined entry by the downstairs key holder.</p>
	<p><i>Some COVID specific matters will be applicable, such as...</i></p>
<p>Track and Trace</p>	<p>Attendance records of each ringing session to be kept for 21 days to assist Track and Trace if required. Use of an electronic device to eliminate any sharing of writing implements or clutter.</p>

This is just an initial guide, each tower will be different requiring some bespoke measures. Much guidance is available on the CCBR website including some rules which are also mitigations, for example limiting ringing time to 15 minutes.

Remember that risk assessments and mitigating measures are not a guarantee that the virus will not be spread. Ringing is allowable only with permission of the incumbent Priest and in line with the CCCBR guidance.

It is important to circulate your risk assessment to your ringers, so they know beforehand what to expect.