



What are we worried about?

The reasons for considering the risks of Covid-19 when bell ringing

We owe it to ourselves and each other to understand and reduce the risks of transmission of the Coronavirus. We will then be able to ring more safely. Returning to ringing will be gradual. This is the first of a set of a six guidance notes to help with that gradual return.

These guidance notes cover the Health and Safety Executive's Five Steps to risk assessment.

Step 1: Identify the hazards

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them

Step 5: Review your risk assessment and update if necessary

Step 1: Identify the Hazards

The specific hazard we are concerned with is the risk of catching and/or transmitting the Coronavirus. Features of the Coronavirus that are important to ringers are:

- It spreads through droplets, particularly from sneezes and coughs
- These droplets can land on any surface and survive there for periods of up to 72 hours
- Our chance of inhaling the virus depends on distance from the source and the time we spend near that source
- We can easily pick up the droplets on our hands and carry them to our own face, or move them to another object from which someone else might pick up the virus.
- It has a far longer incubation period than influenza and while incubating the disease one can spread it to others very easily
- **There is asymptomatic transmission – you can have the disease without knowing it and transmit it to others**
- There was no pre-existing natural immunity in the community and there is no vaccine
- **As a result of all of the above, it's highly infectious – much more so than seasonal 'flu. The mortality rates are significant with most fatalities being in men over 55-59, women over 65-69 years old, and the BAME community.**

Also remember that we have not rung the bells for several months so something may have happened in the tower without our knowledge that may cause problems when we start to ring.

1 What are we worried about?

2 Making your tower as safe as possible

3 Checklist for recommending ringing

4 Running safe ringing sessions

5 Can I go ringing safely?

6 How bell ringers are assessing risk



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Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

The characteristics of bell ringing exposes ringers to risks which we need to address and mitigate

What are the particular features of ringing which increase the risk?

- We ring close together
- Many ringing rooms have little or no ventilation
- Some ringing rooms are up narrow staircases
- We touch lots of things that others touch in the course of normal ringing
- Many ringers are in higher risk groups, as are other church users

Ringling Environments

This Coronavirus thrives in airless environments, where it can settle on a smooth damp wall

There are five other guidance notes published alongside this one. Steps 3, 4, 5 are covered within these.

Making your tower as safe as possible

How can you make your tower a safe place to ring during the Covid-19 pandemic (covering Step 3)

Checklist for recommending ringing

Guidance for steeplekeepers and tower captains (covering Step 3 and Step 4)

Running safe ringing sessions

Guidance for those running ringing

Can I go ringing safely?

Guidance for individual ringers

How bell ringers are assessing risk

Managing the risk of Coronavirus in bell towers – for Incumbent and Churchwardens

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