



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FOR THE CARE OF CHURCHES**

# **CHURCH LIGHTING**

## **INTERIOR LIGHTING**

Lighting in churches is particularly important for many reasons and a good artificial lighting scheme can considerably enhance the building and its use.

A church is no ordinary building. Its architecture has symbolic significance and many features have a clear purpose in liturgy and worship, with the focus of interest varying during services. Additionally, many churches are also used for other activities such as concerts and community events. Therefore, whilst there are certain basic requirements such as light for reading, safety and security, simply adding more fittings may not be the answer. The quality and direction of the light is as important as its intensity, and a well designed lighting scheme will take this into consideration.

If the existing lighting in a church is thought to be unsatisfactory, it is useful to consider why. For instance, do the fittings no longer provide enough light, or is the installation unsuitable for the current pattern of worship? If the former, it could be that, given safe access, cleaning the lamps/reflectors/shades may be all that is required. It might also be possible to adjust or supplement an existing installation, but technical advice will be needed to ensure that the electrical systems and fittings can support change.

When considering a new lighting scheme, it is important that the PCC is clear of its reasons for change, its needs and what it hopes to achieve. This information should be included in the brief to its lighting designer. At this stage, consideration can also be given to the use of alternative energy sources and ways in which the church can contribute to energy efficiency and sustainability.

The DAC is always happy to give informal advice about a draft scheme at an early stage.

### **Fittings and illumination**

Luminaires should be designed and constructed to conform to all relevant BS and EN standards, and should carry a CE mark where appropriate. Additionally, luminaires

intended for mounting on wood or other normally flammable materials must carry an “F” mark.

Where feasible, long life energy efficient lamps should be utilised. However, it is recognised that these are not always appropriate.

Predicted levels of illumination should ideally achieve those recommended in the “Places of Worship” section of the current edition of the *CIBSE Code for Lighting* (Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers).

## **EXTERNAL LIGHTING**

Floodlighting is often installed to show the church is a living building in the community, but it can also be used to draw attention to the architecture or improve safety and security. There may also be a need for lighting specific items, such as notice boards or external features.

### **Interested parties**

External lighting will affect the local environment and consideration should be given to the church’s immediate neighbours and to the local community, whose views should be sought. Planning authorities must be consulted about the proposals, as the installation may require planning permission in addition to faculty. Where the building is below a regular flight path, advice should also be sought from the CAA (or, where relevant, the RAF) before any scheme is finalised.

The DAC will always welcome the opportunity to give informal advice at an early stage in the planning process.

### **Fittings and installation**

Luminaires should be designed and constructed to conform to all relevant BS and EN standards, and should carry a CE mark where appropriate. They must also be certified for exterior use, and carry an appropriate IP protection rating.

Luminaires must be securely mounted, preferably on concrete plinths when at ground level, and should ideally include adequate means (integral or otherwise) to minimise damage from vandalism.

Schemes must ensure that no unnecessary light pollution is created, and where possible, luminaires should be located to avoid causing glare to people entering/leaving the building. They must also avoid causing glare to passing traffic and to people on nearby footpaths.

The effect of any foliage between luminaires and their target should be taken into account, especially where this may change seasonally.

Any automatic timer controls for exterior lighting should include a battery backup. Any associated photocell should be mounted where it will not be affected by street or other local lighting, and should ideally be mounted facing north light.

All cable trenches must comply with the requirements of the current edition of the IEE Regulations (BS7671) and any subsequent amendments. Cable routes must be carefully considered to minimise disturbance of sensitive areas, especially those

containing graves. An archaeologist may need to be present when trenches are dug. It is wise to consult the DAC archaeology adviser during the planning stage.

### **COSTS, MAINTENANCE AND INSURANCE**

When designing a lighting scheme, costs, including capital expense, running costs and maintenance need to be taken into account. The health and safety aspects of maintenance access must also be considered.

Any proposed change to the wiring or lighting must be approved by the church's insurers.

### **FACULTY**

It will be necessary for the PCC to apply to the Chancellor of the Diocese for a Faculty before the installation can go ahead

The application to the DAC for its advice (first stage of faculty procedure) must include full details of the proposed lighting scheme, with plans and photographs showing the location of fittings and of cable routes, and catalogue cuts of all proposed luminaires. Full details of how the lighting is to be controlled should also be provided

For exterior lighting schemes, the application to the DAC must also include detailed proposals for mounting the luminaires and, in addition to showing the cable routes, the plans must also show the location of any relevant graves or other monuments.

The church's inspecting architect/surveyor should be advised of the proposals and his/her views given on the appropriate form

### **ELECTRICITY**

All electric wiring should be installed in accordance with the Regulations for Electrical Installations issued by the Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE), Current edition, under British Standard BS7671.

Electrical contractors enrolled with the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) or the Electrical Contractors Association (ECA) should be employed for work in churches.

### **ROUTINE MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION**

The Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991 requires the churchwarden to inspect the fabric of the church at least once a year, to produce a report on the fabric of the church and the articles belonging to it to the PCC and to make that report to the annual parochial church meeting on behalf of the PCC. Under the Measure, electrical systems must be inspected every five years and fire extinguishers must be serviced annually. It is important that routine precautions and periodic tests are not neglected as many fires in churches are caused by faulty electric wiring and apparatus. There are various types of fire extinguishers which are suitable for different applications. Advice can be obtained from the Fire Brigade or the church insurers about the right type of extinguishers needed. Extinguishers should be properly sited and church officers trained in their use.

**Further general information can be found on the  
Church Care website ([www.churchcare.co.uk](http://www.churchcare.co.uk)) or in the Council for the Care of  
Churches publications *Wiring of Churches* and *Church Lighting***