

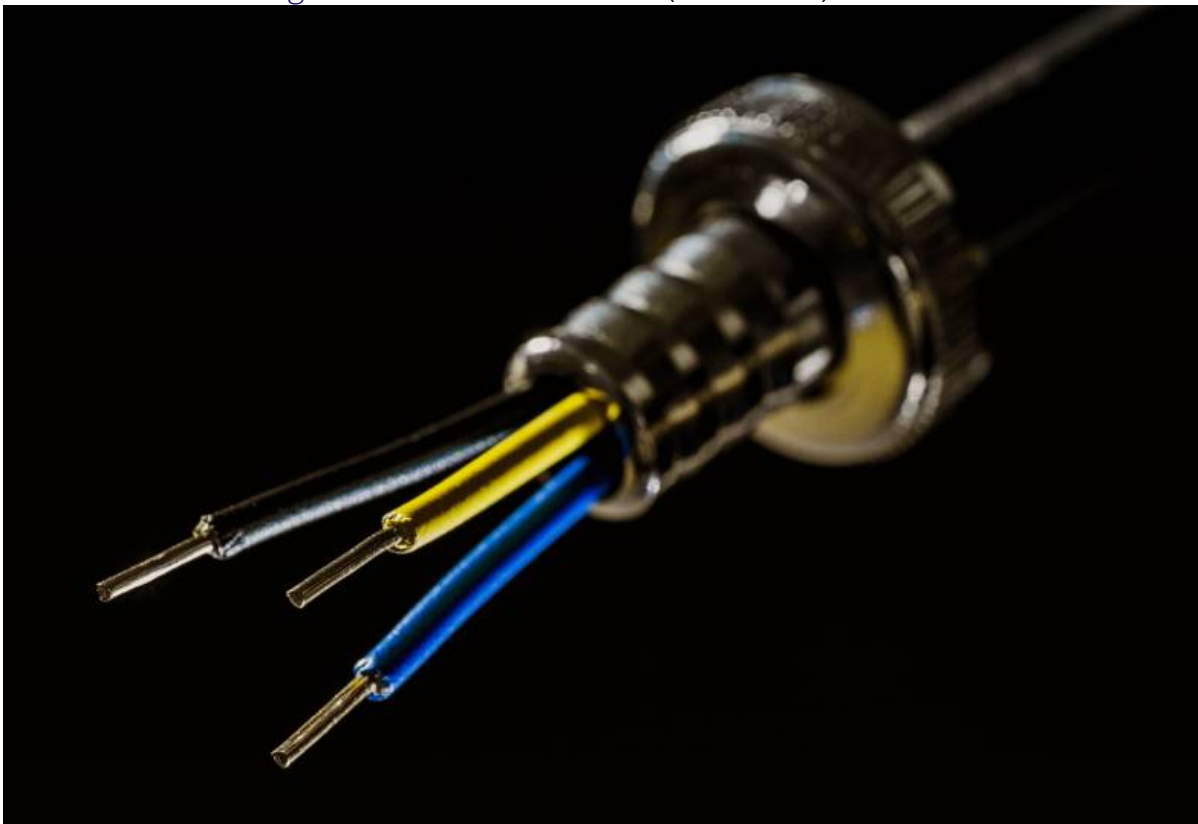
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Looking to use audio visual equipment as part of your regular services?

We can help you choose the one that is right for you and understand how to keep all your electrical systems and equipment safe to use.

Download our guidance

- [Electrical wiring installations in churches \(411.42 KB\)](#)



What do you want from your AV system?

The first step to installing an audio visual system in your church is to know what you want and why.

What do you want out of your sound system?

- To be heard from a few fixed points
- To be heard from anywhere in the building
- For speech only
- For music groups
- For worship leaders
- For organ sound

What do you need out of your visual system?

- For people at the back to see the people at the front
- To include everyone in worship
- To show the words of hymns and songs
- To show high quality videos or screen films
- As part of talks and sermons

Think about:

- Who will operate the system? What about on weekday services?
- Will it be used by people who will just want to 'turn it on', possibly at the mains switch?
- Will there always be technical support on hand?
- Do you want to control it from a tablet or mobile phone? Will these portable devices always be available (e.g. at weddings or funerals)?
- How will you make it accessible to people with visual and/or hearing impairments?
- Keeping it safe so the building can be left open. Lock away lightweight and portable parts and install other parts carefully to prevent casual theft

Warning:

Resist buying a system that is more than what you need.

Speakers

What will your speakers look like?

- Avoid bulky, domestic looking speakers
- Install slim line products if available and suitable
- Aim to be invisible; the colour of the speaker should match the background

Where should you install them?

- If possible, install the speakers in the roof
- Avoid fixings into historic timbers, on piers or columns
- Avoid fixings within window reveals and above capitals

Sound desks

A sound desk is usually fixed in place. You don't want it to dominate the space.

So where should you install it?

- The person controlling the system needs to be able to hear what they are doing
- Remember that controls installed in a different room are difficult to adjust
- It should not look out of place when not in use
- And it should not be obtrusive when it is

What should it look like?

- Choose something small and minimalist
- Bigger does not always mean better

Projectors, screens and monitors

Before you install visual equipment, think about:

- The impact it will have on the focus of worshippers
- How you will make the material on-screen available to people with visual impairment
- Projecting onto a large area of blank wall instead
- If you need more than one screen. All the time or just now and again?
- How you will move it out of sight when not in use

Remember that the layout of historic churches doesn't always work well with large screens.

So where should you install it?

- If you don't need to fix anything into the fabric, then we recommend you experiment first
- It should work well when the sun is low and high in the sky
- Does everyone need to see it? Or just those with poor sight lines?
- Try hanging the screen from a bracket hinged from the chancel wall
- Or put the screen behind the chancel arch. Then lower it and raise it electronically.

Don't let temporary arrangements become permanent. Talk to your diocese about faculty early on.

Get professional advice

Get help from an independent adviser who understands:

- What churches need
- How to work with historic buildings (if relevant)

Talk to your Diocesan Advisory Committee secretary. They will:

- Tell you which churches nearby have done similar work so you can visit them
- Talk to their own advisor on AV systems for more information

Choose a wiring system

Any wiring system that complies with the Institution of Engineering and Technology's Wiring Regulations is suitable for use in a church.

But choose the colour of the cables and wiring runs carefully. They can have a dramatic effect on the look of the church.

These have to be agreed before any work starts, so contact your DAC as early as possible to talk about permissions.

Test and inspect your wiring systems

Inspect and test your electrical installation every 5 years to make sure it is safe.

Make it easier on yourself and time it with your quinquennial inspection. Get your architect to help you hire an electrician. Don't try this yourself.

Test your portable appliances

Test your portable appliances (e.g. cleaners, electric heaters, computers, projectors). How often depends on the appliance, where it is, and how often you use it.

First, do a visual inspection of the cables yourself. Look for:

- Cuts or scratches to the cable's covering
- Cracked casings
- Bent pins on the plug
- Loose parts or screws
- Burn marks
- The outer covering of the cable not being gripped where it enters the plug or equipment (can the cores of the cables be seen?)

Then, hire someone to test your appliances. Because this requires specific equipment, you need someone who can understand the test results.

The appliances that fail the test should be removed and either:

- Repaired and re-tested
- Or replaced

Make sure you include Christmas tree lights (or any other seasonal item) in the test.

Repairs of electrical wiring

For all repairs, hire an electrician. Don't try this yourself.

The electrician should be registered for commercial and industrial work. Your insurance company may also have conditions on their qualifications. Call them to find out.

Search for a contractor:

- NICEIC
- Electrical Contractors' Association
- NAPIT

The law and guidance

Churches have to comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. The easiest way is by testing your electrical systems and equipment regularly.

Another way is by conforming to the IET Wiring Regulations. They are non-statutory, but the Health and Safety Executive may use them to provide evidence of compliance.

Also of interest



Accessibility



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Insurance, Health & Safety



Statement of significance

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