

Dear Licensee:

I want to thank you for continuing to work with the City's Licensing and Public Safety Officials as we go forward in sustaining the highest safety standards for nightclubs and restaurants throughout the City. I believe that awareness and information are critical to protecting public safety in licensed premises.

The City of Boston created these Safety Guidelines to help you ensure that your premises are not only safe, but that your staff is adequately trained to manage an emergency, should one arise. As we all know, preparation is the key to coping with emergencies. These guidelines can help you and your staff to prepare for any type of emergency/evacuation of the premises. I encourage you to familiarize yourself and your staff with the guidelines and use them as a tool for developing a more comprehensive fire safety plan for your premises.

I appreciate the valuable contributions that you make to the cultural and social fabric of this City. I also recognize the urgency of taking proactive steps to ensure the safety of patrons who enjoy all of what Boston has to offer. As a responsible business owner, every licensee in the City is obligated to address safety matters. Let us continue to work together to keep the focus on the safety of patrons. If you need further assistance, please feel free to contact Patricia Malone, Director of the City's Office of Consumer Affairs and Licensing at 617-635-4165.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Menino  
Mayor of Boston

**Fire and Emergency Safety Planning  
in Licensed Premises**

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## INTRODUCTION

While the probability of fire in places of assembly may be low, when fire does occur, the potential for loss of life is extremely high.<sup>1</sup> For any **Fire Safety Program** to be successful; it must have the owner/manager's full commitment. Owners/managers must initiate and continuously support all elements of their fire safety and egress plan. Owners must:

- Train each employee in identification and proper correction of fire hazards common to their type of occupancy.
- Train each employee so they are familiar with the **Fire Safety and Egress Plan** and hazard locations.
- Ensure that training prepares staff for various types of emergencies, which may occur.
- Ensure all fire safety systems and equipment are in proper working status through normal testing and maintenance and that all maintenance records are readily available for review by the authorities having jurisdiction.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A FIRE SAFETY PLAN?

- Provides written policies and procedures that outline specific duties and responsibilities in an emergency.
- Outlines training for owners and employees on actions to be taken in the event of a fire or panic.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Versteeg, [Assembly Occupancies](#), NFPA Case Study

- Establishes a procedure for a systematic, safe and orderly evacuation.
- Identifies fire prevention activities and duties, which will reduce the likelihood of fire.
- Provides proper information as part of a continuing employee-training program.
- When implemented and maintained could satisfy the legal obligations of the owner.

A **Fire Safety Plan** will only be effective if it is prepared in advance, organized and implemented daily. As required by Massachusetts's regulations - 527 CMR 10.13 (2) (a), all employees must be ready to direct and assist occupants in the event of fire or other emergency.

#### **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

##### ***527CMR 10.13 (2) - Places of Assembly***

- (a) General - The employees or attendants of places of public assembly shall be trained and drilled in the duties they are to perform in case of fire, panic or other emergency.***
- (b) Egress Plan - A plan showing the occupant, seating diagram and location of exits and of aisles leading thereto shall be submitted to the head of the fire department and an approved copy shall be kept on the premises.***

### CONTENTS OF AN EGRESS PLAN

- A floor plan diagram showing the occupant load capacity, egress calculations, seating or standing room and location of exits and aisles.
- The Egress Plan is not valid until it is submitted and approved by both the building and fire code official.
- Egress plans are required to be on site at all times. Owners/managers and employees must be familiar with this plan.
- Your Egress Plan should identify the legal occupant load for each floor or room and the method you are using to control occupancy. If the premise is multi-level, a staff member shall be designated to control the legal limit of each level.

### SECTION 1. HOW DO I START?

- Survey your building. Identify all access and egress paths, and create a basic egress diagram. Show the primary and secondary fire exits.
- Ensure that egress paths exit to a public way.
- Consider how the unique features of your building affect life safety. Are you in a high-rise, basement or on multi-levels?
- Identify what types of life safety systems are present.

- Include fire protective systems such as sprinkler systems, fire alarm, kitchen hood suppression systems, and egress components. Understand how they function.
- Identify the staff that will be available to assist in evacuation. Identify the number of patrons allowed to occupy your location. Consider special needs, such as non-English speaking or physical disabilities.

## **SECTION 2. WHO SHOULD BE TRAINED?**

It is required that every employee working in a place of assembly be trained in the duties they are to perform in the event of a fire or emergency. The size, use and complexity of your venue will determine the makeup of your Fire/Life Safety Team. Trained supervisory staff can be of great value in directing, and assisting the orderly movement of people in the event of a fire or other emergency.

- Designate an individual who has the knowledge and authority to implement the safety plan.
- Designate an employee to assume responsibilities when the event the designated person is unavailable.
- Involve all employees.
- Assign staff specific duties to perform in the event of an emergency.

### SECTION 3. WHAT TYPE OF TRAINING SHOULD EMPLOYEES RECEIVE?

- **How to sound an alarm** - Employees should know the location of all “pull stations” (required to be within 5 feet of each exit). They should also know how to alert management to any condition that requires evacuation when they are not near a pull station or when a pull station is not available.
- **How to activate an alarm** - If your location does not have a manual or automatic alarm system, employees must be familiar with procedures on how to activate an evacuation alert.
- **How to manually silence entertainment** (live music, DJ, radio, television) and turn on house lights if not done automatically upon activation of the fire alarm systems.
- **How to notify the fire department** - Employees should know to notify the Boston Fire Department by **dialing 9-1-1**, even if the fire department is notified automatically by the alarm system. The caller should provide detailed information on the cause of the alarm.
- **How to evacuate** - All employees should be able to recognize the sound of the fire alarms and know two ways out of their work area.
- **How to initiate evacuation procedures** - It is essential that employees start evacuation procedures

immediately after an alarm is sounded. Patrons often look to employees for direction during an emergency. Indecision on the part of employees can spread confusion among the patrons and delay evacuation.

- **How to direct patrons to best exit** - Patrons are most likely unfamiliar with where exits are located and will rely on the employees to direct them to the nearest exit, not necessarily the main exit.
- **How to ensure all are evacuated** - Many disabled persons do not use obvious aides and are not visibly restricted, however, they may have difficulty evacuating safely by themselves. Building staff should call out, “Who needs help?” Staff should also be alert for guests who are unable to respond due to a hearing impairment. Visually impaired guests may not be able to evacuate on their own. All areas of the location must be inspected to ensure that all patrons have evacuated safely.
- **How to make sure all pathways are clear** - As legally required, an inspection must occur each day to ensure that all exits and egress routes are not obstructed and are in good operating condition.
- **How to reinforce the training** - A written policy must be part of any training information/egress plan that discusses how employees are to ensure that capacity limits are enforced.

#### **SECTION 4. HOW OFTEN SHOULD TRAINING BE HELD?**

- Upon arrival of all new employees.
- At least semi-annually.
- In larger more complex venues, often enough to ensure all employees are familiar with their duties and responsibilities.

#### **SECTION 5. HOW DO I IMPLEMENT THE FIRE SAFETY PLAN?**

Staff meetings, new employee orientations, fire safety bulletins, brochures and fire safety training videos are effective ways of introducing employees to the **Fire Safety Plan**. Fire safety training should be reinforced by assigning specific fire safety responsibilities as part of the regular work duties and through announced and unannounced fire drills. Fire drills should always be treated as real emergencies.

#### **SECTION 6. WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD EMPLOYEES TAKE IF A FIRE/OR OTHER EMERGENCY OCCURS?**

- Stay calm.
- React immediately.
- Notify everyone in the immediate area.
- Activate your emergency evacuation procedures as outlined in your **Fire Safety Plan**.
- Ensure a 911 call is made. (Identify yourself; clearly state the name and address of the premises and the nature of the emergency).
- Notify the manager and other staff members on emergency conditions. Follow your safety plan.

- Once outside, stay out and move away from the building.

#### **SECTION 7. WHAT ARE RESPONSE PROCEDURES FOR A FIRE ALARM?**

- Treat every alarm as an emergency.
- A responsible person proceeds to the fire alarm annunciator panel immediately upon alarm and follows safety procedures in their **Fire Safety Plan**.
- Have a knowledgeable staff member meet the fire department at the front entrance.
- Trained employees may investigate to determine the location of the fire, and take steps to extinguish it if possible without endangering themselves or others.

#### **SECTION 8. WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FIRE EXTINGUISHERS ON THE PREMISES?**

- Necessary in all places of assembly.
- Distributed so that travel distance is not more than 75 feet for a Class A fire hazard.
- Located near likely hazards, but not so close that they would be damaged/isolated by fire.
- Along normal path of egress if possible.
- Physically inspected monthly. Tested annually.
- Only operated by individuals who have been properly trained.

For additional information on types and locations of extinguishers, contact your local distributors of fire extinguisher equipment.

**SECTION 9. WHO REGULATES DECORATIONS, FURNISHINGS AND INTERIOR FINISHES REGULATED IN LICENSED PREMISES?**

The Boston Fire Code Article IX, 527 CMR 21.00, 527 CMR 29.00 and 780 CMR the State Building Code, regulates decorations, furnishings and interior finish in places of assembly. Applications may be applied for at the Boston Fire Department's Prevention Division, 1010 Mass. Ave. 4<sup>th</sup> floor or by calling 617-343-3527. Office hours are Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 3:30 pm.

**SECTION 10. ARE ALL LICENSED PREMISES REQUIRED TO BE EQUIPPED WITH A FIRE ALARM SYSTEM AND SPRINKLER SYSTEM?**

Most licensed premises are required to have some type of fire warning or protection system. Specific requirements for alarm and sprinkler systems are regulated M.G.L. 148 and 780 CMR, the State Building Code. After the tragedy in Rhode Island, it is very likely there will be changes proposed to existing regulations.

**SECTION 11. WHAT ARE THE CITY OF BOSTON'S REQUIREMENTS FOR A FIRE SAFETY PLAN?**

During the annual license renewal process, all licensees in the City of Boston will be required to submit a completed License Premises/Assembly (Fire) **Safety Checklist** in order to obtain the upcoming year's license. The **Checklist** will become part of the annual license renewal process, required by both the Office of Consumer Affairs & Licensing and The Boston Licensing Board.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CONTACTS**

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Boston Police Department - Licensed Premises Unit  
Rm. 817, Boston City Hall  
Boston, MA 617-635-3836

Boston Fire Department  
1010 Massachusetts Avenue  
Boston, MA 617-343-3372

Inspectional Services Department  
1010 Massachusetts Avenue  
Boston, MA 617-635-5300

## **SOURCES**

Boston Fire Department

National Fire Protection Association, "Life Safety Code"

BOCO, National Fire Prevention Code/1993 Commentary