

## **CROWD MANAGER REQUIREMENTS AND DUTIES**

In Accordance with NFPA 1, *The Uniform Fire Code*, establishments with an occupant load of at least 50 people shall have at least one trained crowd manager or crowd manager supervisor. When the occupant load exceeds 250 people, the establishment must provide additional trained crowd managers or crowd supervisors at a ratio of one for every 250 occupants.

### History

The deadliest fires in U.S. history involved large places of assembly, particularly indoor venues where ways to exit the building were not immediately apparent to panicked patrons. Most recently, on Feb. 20, 2003, 100 people died in a fast-moving fire at a Rhode Island nightclub; the fire injured about 200 others.

Nationwide, this horrific fire sparked awareness about the fire code issues in nightclubs and other places of assembly. Those issues include crowd management – the tricky business of controlling groups of people at clubs, conventions, and other gatherings, and making sure that facilities are equipped to handle such crowds.

### Requirements

#### NFPA 1, 20.1.5.6

All assembly occupancies shall be provided with a minimum of one trained crowd manager or crowd manager supervisor where the occupant load exceeds 250. Additional trained crowd managers or crowd manager supervisors shall be provided at a ratio of 1 crowd manager or crowd manager supervisor for every additional 250 occupants. This requirement shall not apply to assembly occupancies used exclusively for religious worship with an occupant load not exceeding 2,000.

- Seating accommodating more than 200 persons shall be securely fastened to the floor, except where fastened together in groups of not less than three and not exceeding seven. (*Exception:* Seats not secured to the floor shall be permitted in restaurants, night clubs, and other occupancies where fastening seats to the floor might be impracticable and the seating does not exceed one seat per each 15 sq. ft. of floor area.)
- Every room constituting assembly occupancy and not having fixed seats shall have the occupant load of the room posted in a conspicuous place near the main exit from the room and shall be maintained by the owner. (*The occupant load shall never exceed this limit for any reason.*)
- Seating plan complies with exit/egress requirements:
  1. Travel distances to an exit shall not exceed 150 ft. in any assembly occupancy. (200ft in a sprinklered building)
  2. The aisle access way width between seats shall not be less than 12 inches
  3. Rows of seating served by aisles or doorways at both ends shall not exceed 100 seats per row, but the width of aisle shall increase 0.3 inches per seat over 14.
  4. Seating at tables shall have a required clear width of an aisle access way of not less than 12 inches. The distance to an aisle shall not exceed 36 ft.
  5. The minimum width of aisles:
    - a. Table and chair seating shall be not less than 44 inches.
    - b. Rows of seating shall not be less than 36 inches.
- Assembly occupancies, scenery and stage properties shall be of noncombustible materials, limited-combustible materials, or fire retardant treated wood.
- Fabrics, draperies, curtains and other furnishings and decorations shall meet the flame propagation performance criteria contained in NFPA 701 *Standard methods of Fire Tests for Flame Propagation of Textiles and Films*. Materials that cannot be treated for flame retardancy shall not be used.
- The quantity and arrangement of combustible contents shall provide an adequate level of safety to life from fire.
- No open flame devices or pyrotechnic devices may be used in any assembly occupancy unless approved by the AHJ. (*Open flame devices shall be permitted in accordance with NFPA 1,20.1.4.3(3)*)

### Duties

- The crowd manager shall receive approved training in crowd management techniques.
- The employees or attendants shall be trained and drilled in the duties they are to perform in case of fire, panic, or other emergency to effect orderly exiting.
- Employees or attendants shall be instructed in the proper use of portable fire extinguishers and other manual fire suppression equipment where provided.
- In the following assembly occupancies, an audible announcement shall be made, or a projected image shall be shown, prior to the start of each program that notifies occupants of the location of exits to be used in case of a fire or other emergency.
  1. Theaters
  2. Motion picture theaters
  3. Auditoriums
  4. Other similar assembly occupancies with occupant loads exceeding 300 where there are noncontinuous programs
- Crowd managers are required for the planning and implementation of the emergency evacuation:
  1. Can you turn the music off?
  2. Can you turn the lights on?
  3. Can you see the entire room?
  4. What is your plan to get the crowd's attention in case of emergency?
  5. Who is responsible for these actions?
  6. Do you know the location of the fire alarm pull stations?

### **Pre-event check list:**

1. Are there adequate exits?
2. Are the exit signs working?
3. Do all exit doors function properly?
4. Are exit passages clear of obstructions?
5. Does the emergency lighting work?
6. Is the fire alarm and sprinkler system in good working order?
7. Inspection of all egress items outside of the building.
  - a. Are the exits doors and walkways clear of obstructions and trip hazards?
  - b. Are the exits illuminated at the point of egress/
  - c. Is there proper clearance at the street and parking lots for emergency fire apparatus?

### **During the event - Awareness**

1. Prevent overcrowding by monitoring the amount of people in the assembly area. (count them entering and leaving - do not exceed the capacity at any time)
2. Check the site to ensure pre-event seating, exhibits and decorations comply with the plan.
3. Advise occupants of the exit locations.
4. Walk the room to ensure the exit paths and doors remain clear.
5. Look for situations that could lead to challenges in the event of an emergency.
6. In the event of an emergency activate your emergency evacuation plan.