Develop and Maintain an Egress Plan

527 CMR 1.00: 10.8 and 20.1.5.10.4 and 780 CMR 1004.1 and 1004.3

A plan showing the occupant load, seating diagram, and location of exits and aisles leading to exits shall be approved by the building department and kept on the premises.

The occupant load shall be posted near the room's main exit.

Keep Means of Egress Clear and Properly Lighted

527 CMR 1.00: 14.4

The means of escape from a building must always be kept clear of obstructions, properly lighted, in good repair, and ready for use. This includes removal of snow and ice as necessary.

Overcrowding

M.G.L. c.148, s.34A, B and C

Severe penalties for exceeding occupancy limits and blocked egress were created in the aftermath of The Station nightclub fire.

Make Sure All Upholstered, Reupholstered and Molded Furniture is Code Compliant

527 CMR 1.00:12.6.3

All regulated seating shall comply with the applicable provisions of 527 CMR 1.00. Requirements for non-sprinklered buildings are different than for buildings equipped with automatic sprinklers. Furniture should be resistant to fire. It can produce volumes of toxic smoke.

Maintain the Fire Protection Systems

527 CMR 1.00: 1.1.4

All fire protection systems (such as fire alarm, smoke and heat detection, and sprinkler systems) shall remain operable and in good condition at all times. Systems shall be tested and inspected as required.

Install and Maintain Fire Extinguishers

527 CMR 1.00: 13.6

Fire extinguishers shall be conspicuously located, readily accessible and usable in case of fire. They shall be inspected, tested, and maintained in accordance with NFPA 10.

Prohibit Smoking

M.G.L. c.270, s.22 and 105 CMR 661.400

Smoking is prohibited in workplaces including theaters, restaurants and bars in order to protect employees from second-hand smoke.

Division of Fire Safety
978-567-3375 • www.mass.gov/dfs
3/18

Fire Safety in Places of Assembly



DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICES
Peter J. Ostroskey • State Fire Marshal

A **place of assembly** is a structure where people gather for civic, social, or religious functions. The Massachusetts State Building Code defines places of assembly in five categories including: theaters, dance halls, nightclubs, restaurants, exhibition halls, and places of worship.

This pamphlet provides a summary of the fire prevention regulations affecting places of assembly. References are included where more detailed information may be found.

Fire prevention laws are found in M.G.L. Chapter 148. Fire code regulations are found in 527 Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 1.00. The Department of Fire Services' website has links to these documents and many helpful Advisories. Visit www.mass.gov/dfs and search for *FSD Advisories*.

Contact your local fire department for more information.

Ensure Compliance and Safety of Open Flame Devices

527 CMR 1.00: 10.10 and 20.1.5.2

Open flame devices and special food service devices (such as candles, food warmers, and chafing dishes) require a permit from the fire department. Consult the local fire department prior to use.

Obtain a Permit for Special Effects

527 CMR 1.00: 65.4.2

Special effects and pyrotechnics (including flash powder and flash paper) require a permit from the local fire department and must be conducted by a licensed person. Their use is prohibited in nightclubs, bars, discos and dance halls.

Crowd Manager Requirements

527 CMR 1.00: 20.1.5.6

Crowd manager requirements apply to certain facilities when open to the public.

Experience has shown that patrons look to staff for guidance during an emergency.

The owner or operator of a nightclub, dance hall, discotheque or bar, with an occupancy load of 100 persons or more shall designate one crowd manager for every 250 occupants. To learn more about the requirements, or to take an online training program, visit www.mass.gov/dfs.

Keep Fire Lanes Free of Obstructions

527 CMR 1.00: 18.2.3.5 and 18.2.4

All designated fire lanes shall be clearly marked and kept free of obstructions.

Make Sure Decorations, Curtains, Draperies and Window Treatments are Code Compliant

527 CMR 1.00: 12.6.2

Documentation shall be provided showing that all regulated materials conform with the applicable provisions of NFPA 701 regarding fire resistance and should be kept on file and available on the premises. Documentation should be provided by any vendor or manufacturer supplying new materials.

Announce the Exits

527 CMR 1.00: 20.1.5.8.3

The owner or operator of any business or activity located in any A-1, A-2, or A-3 occupancy (public places generally), which features a performance before an audience shall, prior to the start of such performance, make an audible announcement that notifies occupants of the location of exits to be used in case of fire or other emergency.

In addition to the audible announcements, any written program, playbill or similar document distributed prior to each performance, must include a diagram of the location of all egress routes and areas of rescue assistance for use by people with disabilities.