



CHARLESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



Fire Marshal Division

Information Bulletin

Assembly Entertainment Venue Fire Safety

Assembly entertainment venues (bars, nightclubs, concert venues, etc.) are an important part of our community and the hospitality industry. These venues often draw substantial crowds throughout the year, with even greater attendance during the holidays and special events. Managers, owners, and employees must recognize their responsibility for maintaining code compliance in order to protect patrons, employees, and first responders. The Fire Marshal Division will conduct routine inspections and periodic night time inspections to verify compliance.

As a reminder of our expectations, we have outlined some of the major violations that will be strictly enforced during all routine or periodic inspections. These safety items should be familiar to everyone within the service industry. All of the following items are classified as immediate danger to life safety and will be rectified with the utmost urgency.

1. The **Occupant Load** on the posted **Certificate of Occupancy** will be strictly adhered to at all times. The occupant load includes all people located at your establishment – this includes patrons, staff, and performers.
2. An employee must be posted at the door(s) during any peak hours to provide a **valid and accurate** head count. The head count must be immediately available upon request by Fire or Police officials.
3. All exits will be unobstructed and unlocked from the interior at **all times** during occupancy.
4. Decorations will be approved or within set standards and meet flame resistant testing guidelines ([see Informational Bulletin - Decorative Materials in Assembly Occupancies](#)).
5. No open flames or pyrotechnics are allowed within the assembly without prior written approval and permits the necessary permits. Contact the Fire Marshal Division for additional information.
6. All fire extinguishers must be mounted, accessible, and serviced within the last 12 month.
7. Each assembly must have a [Fire Safety and Emergency Action Plan](#) that covers the evacuation of the premises in case of an emergency and the associated duties of each employee.

The items listed above are the violations that will receive the highest priority during night time inspections; however, it is not all encompassing. All business owners, managers, and employees should be diligently adhering to the established fire codes. It is your responsibility to know, understand, and gain compliance with adopted regulations, codes, and requirements.

Due to the nature of the safety violations listed above, there will be zero tolerance for non-compliance and citations will be issued immediately at the time of the inspection. This course of action is for the safety of our citizens, visitors, and the preservation of our City.

Please contact the City of Charleston Fire Department – Fire Marshal Division at (843)724-3429 with any questions or for additional information.