

Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations  
**DESIGNATED CROWD MANAGER REQUIREMENTS**

MASSACHUSETTS MGL - EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, 2011

---

As a result of the devastating Station Nightclub fire in Rhode Island on February 20, 2003 in which 100 people were killed and 300 others injured, the Massachusetts Legislature and the Commonwealth's Board of Fire Prevention Regulations enacted sweeping and enhanced fire safety requirements, particularly with respect to nightclubs, dance halls, discothèques, and bars.

**Starting June 1, 2011** every nightclub, dance hall, discothèque or **bar**, with an occupant load of 100 persons or more shall designate a Crowd Manager in accordance with the state regulation.

Crowd Managers are **required** in **ANY FACILITY**:

- With a legal occupant limit of 100 or more persons as indicated on the Certificate of Inspection;  
**AND**
- Designated under the State Building Code (780 CMR) by the Building Official as an Assembly Use (A-2 or A-3 Use Group), which is "principally designed or used as a nightclub, dance hall, discothèque or bar";  
**OR**
- Features entertainment by a live band or recorded music generating above normal sound levels **AND** which has a specific area designated for dancing.

**Theatre/Movie Theaters - Exit Announcements & Diagram of Egress Routes.**

The owner or operator of any business or activity located in any A-1, A-2, or A-3 occupancy, 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 the exits to be used in case of a fire or other emergency. For the purposes of 527 CMR 10.13(2)(c), a performance shall be defined as any form of entertainment by live appearance, or by video, audio or recorded means.

Such announcement may be made in person or by recorded communication and shall be communicated in such a reasonable manner to assure that all persons in attendance are aware of the location of the exits. Owners or operators of assemblies involving video or cinema presentations may use such video or cinematic medium to communicate such audible announcement or projected image. Such announcement or projected image shall include the location of egress routes or areas of rescue assistance for use by persons with disabilities.

In addition to the audible announcements required by 527 CMR 10.13(2)(c), if any written program, playbill or similar document is distributed prior to each program or performance, such document shall include a diagram of the location of all egress routes and areas of rescue assistance for use by persons with disabilities.

**Crowd Manager Requirements**

The purpose of the training is to increase staff awareness of factors involved in fires in nightclubs, dance halls, discothèques or bars. Basic fire safety information is included in the program as well as specific information about the responsibilities of the Crowd Manager and the requirement to complete a Fire and Building Safety Checklist.

Link to the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services - [New Crowd Manager Regulations and Training Program](#)

Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations  
**DESIGNATED CROWD MANAGER REQUIREMENTS**

MASSACHUSETTS MGL - EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, 2011

---

**What is a Crowd Manager required to do?**

- Maintain clear paths of egress
- Assure that the facility does not exceed its occupant load limit
- Initiate a fire alarm if necessary, directing occupants to exits
- Assure that exit announcements are made via an audible announcement prior to the start of each program or performance notifying occupants of the locations of exits to be used in emergencies
- Complete the Fire and Building Safety Checklist daily prior to opening the facility to the public

**Are any Assembly Use facilities exempt? Yes**

Buildings or structures exempt from the requirements for Crowd Manager (even if it has a capacity of 100 or more & featuring entertainment) include:

- Temporary structures erected at the same location for no more than 10 days in any calendar year; **OR**
- Facilities with fixed seating (i.e., theatre, auditorium or concert hall or similar place of assembly); **OR**
- A facility used for private functions where:
  - Each guest has a seat and table for dining; **AND**
  - Attendance is limited by pre-arrangement between the owner/operator and event organizers; **AND**
  - The occupant load of the facility provides no less than 15 NET square feet per occupant.

The fire code changes require "the owner or operator of a nightclub, dance hall, discothèque or bar, with an occupant load of 100 persons or more" to "designate one crowd manager for every 250 occupants or portion thereof based upon the Certificate of Inspection issued" under the State Building Code.

**Training Requirements**

The designated Crowd Manager must be trained and tested every three years. This training and testing is provided on the Internet by the State Fire Marshal at no charge. ***The training program is now available on-line and can be accessed twenty-four hours a day, 7 days a week.*** On-line training is approximately 30 minutes in duration.

**Fire and Building Safety Checklist**

The Fire and Building Safety Checklist is a requirement of the State Fire Code that lists certain fire and life safety features that may be present in your building. The Crowd Manager must complete the Fire and Building Safety Checklist every day the building is open to the public. The checklist insures that the facility is safe to open to the public through a visual inspection of the property conducted each day prior to opening by the trained Crowd Manager.

What kind of items are included on the checklist? Items include the routine safety check of existing fire alarm and fire protection systems, fire extinguishers, exits and exit signs, interior finish, means of egress, crowd control procedures and building occupancy limits.

Who keeps the checklist? The original completed checklists shall be kept on the premises for at least one year and shall be subject to inspection by the Head of the Fire Department, the State Fire Marshal or their designee

Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations  
**DESIGNATED CROWD MANAGER REQUIREMENTS**

MASSACHUSETTS MGL - EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, 2011

---

Are there any **PENALTIES** for allowing dangerous conditions to exist in assembly use group buildings? **Yes.**  
**Massachusetts General Law - Chapter 148: Section 34A.**

Section 34A. (a) Any owner, occupant, lessee or other person having control or supervision of any assembly use group building, as defined by the state building code, and who causes or permits a dangerous condition to exist on the premises at anytime shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$5,000 or by imprisonment in the house of correction for not more than 2 1/2 years, or both.

For the purposes of this section, "dangerous condition" shall mean:

1. Any blocked or impeded ingress or egress;
2. The failure to maintain or the shutting off of any fire protection or fire warning system required by law;
3. The storage of any flammable or explosive without a properly issued permit in quantities in excess of allowable limits of any permit to store;
4. The use of any firework or pyrotechnic device, as defined by the board of fire prevention regulations, without a properly issued permit; or
5. Exceeding the occupancy limit established by the local building inspector pursuant to chapter 143.

(b) Whoever is convicted of a second or subsequent violation of paragraph (a) shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$25,000 or by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than 5 years or in a house of correction for not more than 2 1/2 years, or both such fine and imprisonment.

**Impact on your Liquor License**

Failure to designate and have a Crowd Manager present when open to the public is a violation of the fire code. Each year as a condition of your liquor license renewal the Building Inspector must conduct an inspection of your property. If no violations exist the Building Inspector and Head of the Fire Department sign and issue a valid certificate of inspection for the Local Licensing Authority. The Head of the Fire Department would be unable to sign the inspection certificate with any outstanding fire code violations.

**NEED ASSISTANCE OR HAVE A QUESTION**

Massachusetts Department of Fire Services

Links to: [New Crowd Manager Regulations and Training Program](#)

If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please call [Mark Collins](#), Environmental Safety & Health, Emergency Management - Life Safety Officer at 6-7168 or E-mail: [mark\\_collins@harvard.edu](mailto:mark_collins@harvard.edu)