

# COCOA BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT



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## Background

The deadliest fires in US history have involved places of assembly. Of particular concern are indoor venues where the exits to the building were not immediately apparent to panicked patrons. The Station nightclub fire that occurred on February 20, 2003 killed 100 and injured over 200 others sparking nationwide awareness about the fire and life safety code issues in places of assembly. Florida has now enacted statutes to address this (NFPA 1-20.1.5.6).

## Requirements

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 250 occupants, unless otherwise permitted by one of the following:

1. This requirement shall not apply to assembly occupancies used exclusively for religious worship with an occupant load not exceeding 500.
2. The ratio of trained crowd managers to occupants shall be permitted to be reduced where, in the opinion of the AHJ, the existence of an approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system and the nature of the event warrant.

## Exceptions

This requirement does not apply to assembly occupancies *exclusively* for religious worship where the occupant load does not exceed 500. This ratio can also be reduced where, in the opinion of the Fire Official, the existence of an approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system, and the nature of the event warrant a reduction.

## Required Training

Crowd manager training makes public gatherings safer by teaching event staff how to respond and act when a disaster occurs. Crowd management safety can come into play at sporting events, concerts, special events, state fairs, nightclubs and similar events. Properly trained crowd managers can assist people to exit safely, reducing injuries and death. Crowd manager training is required by all national fire codes at public assemblies. Required training or certified companies to teach it can be found online.

## Compliance

The Cocoa Beach Fire Department performs routine and unplanned spot checks of assembly occupancies and venues to assure compliance with authorized occupant loads and fire and life safety code compliance.

### Pre-Event Checklist

- Is your capacity/occupancy load posted?
- Is your address properly posted?
- Are all exit doors unlocked and clear of obstructions?
- Are all exit doors properly marked with illuminated exit signs?
- Are all exit/egress paths clear and unobstructed?
- Are the streets clear for fire and ambulance apparatus to access the building in the event of an emergency?
- Are the marked fire lanes clear of vehicles and obstruction?
- Are all fire department connections free from obstruction?
- Is the outside of the building adequately illuminated?
- Are all exit signs and emergency lights operational and tested annually?
- Has your fire alarm and sprinkler system been inspected annually and are they fully operational?

## During Event Checklist

- Do not exceed your occupancy capacity. It is designed to protect your occupants and you. You must count the number of people who enter and the number of people who leave and be able to produce that number when requested.
- Walk the rooms and confirm that the exit paths are staying clear. Do not allow people to congregate around or block any exits.
- Assure all marked exits remain unlocked and unobstructed at all times.
- Maintain all fire lanes, fire hydrants, and fire department connections free from vehicles and obstructions.
- Make sure that you have the adequate number of trained staff on duty for the number of occupants.