
What is a certificate of inspection?

A valid certificate of inspection is issued by the building official and co-signed by the fire chief in each community. The certificate indicates that the facility is in compliance with the State Building Code as it relates to assembly occupancies. Occupant load is listed on the certificate.

What if I don't have or can't find my certificate of inspection?

Contact your local building official.

How will I know if my crowd manager has completed the training?

Each person who completes the training can print a certificate of completion at the end of the online training and testing.

When is a crowd manager required?

A trained crowd manager must be present in any nightclub, dance hall, discothèque or bar with an occupant load of 100 or more persons during all hours when the facility is open to patrons.

How many crowd managers are required?

The owner or operator must designate one crowd manager **for every 250 occupants (or portion thereof)**. For example:

- Occupant load 100-250 requires 1 Crowd Manager
- Occupant load 251-500 requires 2 Crowd Managers
- Occupant load 501-750 requires 3 Crowd Managers

What is occupant load?

Occupant load is the **total number of employees, performers and patrons** in an assembly facility (nightclub, dance hall, discothèque or bar) as shown on the certificate of inspection issued to each facility under the State Building Code. It is **not** the number of people actually present in the building at any given time.

What are the penalties for allowing dangerous conditions to exist in assembly use group buildings?

Massachusetts General Law chapter 148, section 34A states that any owner, occupant, lessee or other person having control or supervision of any assembly use group building can be fined up to \$5,000 and possibly imprisoned up to 2-1/2 years for a first offense and fines up to \$25,000 and possible imprisonment up to 5 years for subsequent offenses.

Can my liquor license be affected?

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 cannot sign an inspection certificate if outstanding fire code violations exist.

Where can I get more information?

Visit www.mass.gov/dfs and click on **Crowd Manager** under **Online Services** on the right hand side of the home page. You will find: copies of the regulations; the *Fire and Building Safety Checklist*; this flyer; online access to the training program; an email link for submitting questions; training program HELP; and more.

For more information, contact your local fire chief or the Department of Fire Services Code Compliance & Enforcement Unit at 978-567-3375.

Requirements for Crowd Managers

Frequently Asked Questions

For Owners and Operators of Nightclubs, Dance Halls, Discothèques & Bars

527 Code of Massachusetts Regulations 1.00 Section 20.1.5.6



Which facilities are required to have crowd managers?

527 CMR 1.00, s. 20.1.5.6.1

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.

Are any *Assembly Use* facilities exempt?

527 CMR 1.00, s. 20.1.5.6.1.2

Yes. Buildings or structures exempt from the requirements for crowd manager (even if it has a capacity of 100 or more and 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 square feet per occupant.

Are there other requirements ?

527 CMR 1.00, s. 20.1.5.6.2

Yes. State law and the State Fire Code requires that the State Fire Marshal provide crowd manager training and a means to confirm that the training was successfully completed.

Who is eligible to be a crowd manager and take the training?

527 CMR 1.00, s. 20.1.5.6.3

- Anyone 21 years of age or older;
- The owner or operator of a nightclub, dance hall, discothèque or bar with an occupant load of 100 or more; **OR**
- An employee under the direct control and supervision of the owner or operator of a nightclub, dance hall, discothèque or bar.

What is the purpose of the training?

The training increases staff awareness of factors involved in fires in nightclubs, dance halls, discothèques or bars. As a result of The Station nightclub fire in Rhode Island, state law and the State Fire Code were changed to prevent a similar tragedy from occurring in Massachusetts.

What does the training program include?

The training includes information about basic fire safety, the responsibilities of the crowd manager, and the requirement to complete a *Fire and Building Safety Checklist*.

The online training takes about 40 minutes to complete. Users then take a post test. If users successfully answer 70% of the test questions, they can print a

certificate of completion. If users do not answer 70% of the questions correctly, they can take the exam a second time. If a users fails the test a second time, they can take the training program again.

Where can people get trained?

The training is available online, 24 hours a day. Visit the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services at www.mass.gov/dfs and click on **Crowd Manager** under **Online Services** on the right side of the homepage.

How much does the training cost?

The training program is free.

What is a crowd manager required to do?

527 CMR 1.00, s. 20.1.5.6.4

- 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.

What is the *Fire and Building Safety Checklist*?

527 CMR 1.00, s. 20.1.5.6.4

The *Fire and Building Safety Checklist* is a requirement of the State Fire Code that lists fire and life safety features in a building. The checklist must be completed every day by a crowd manager who has successfully completed the training, prior to the facility being opened to the public.

Checklist items include routine safety checks of existing fire alarm and fire protection systems, fire extinguishers, exits and exit signs, interior finishes, means of egress, crowd control procedures and building occupancy limits.

Who keeps the checklist?

527 CMR 1.00, s. 20.1.5.6.4

The original completed checklists are kept on the premises for at least one year and is subject to inspection by the head of the fire department, the State Fire Marshal or their designee.

Where can I find out more about the *Fire and Building Safety Checklist*?

The online training program provides additional information about the checklist. It can be downloaded at Massachusetts Department of Fire Services website (www.mass.gov/dfs) - click on **Crowd Manager** under **Online Services** on the right hand side of the home page.