

City of Roanoke Fire-EMS Information Bulletin



Public Assembly

A Fact sheet on Public Assembly Fire Safety

In the event of a fire in a public assembly, house staff such as ushers and stage hands will be called on to assist with a prompt evacuation of patrons and players from the facility. Preparing staff ahead of time on both the facility's fire emergency plan and on how to manage an efficient and orderly evacuation of patrons is key to a safe outcome.

Staff Preparation

A smooth evacuation is dependent on staff members being prepared ahead of time to assist large numbers of people while exiting the building.

Responsible staff members should be familiar with the following:

- Layout of the facility.
- Location of all exits.
- Locations of all pull alarms.
- Sound of the fire alarm.
- Building evacuation procedures.

Evacuating Patrons

Evacuation should begin immediately upon alarm, as the spread of fire and smoke can be very rapid. Every second counts for a safe evacuation. Here are some points to keep in mind.

- **Keep people moving** calmly, yet quickly. No one should be allowed to run. Assist those individuals with special needs.
- **Use all exits.** Be aware of all evacuation routes. Use the safest route available to quickly evacuate all patrons.
- **Keep patrons informed of the situation.** Have a prepared evacuation message. This helps convey appropriate evacuation instructions and takes the pressure off of staff.

- **Instruct people to move away from the building.** With a large group of people to get out of the building, and numerous Fire Fighters and equipment to get inside, it is important to lessen congestion as much as possible.
- **Prevent people from reentering the building.** Patrons may re-enter the building only after the Fire Department has declared it safe to do so.
- **Meet the Fire Department.** A designated person, usually a supervisor or house manager, should meet the arriving Fire Department to inform them of the situation and assist them as needed.
- **Designate a reunion location.** Decide on a single location for patrons who have become separated from their parties to reunite.

When the alarm sounds, or a fire is discovered, an orderly evacuation of the facility should begin immediately. Delaying evacuation could prove deadly.