

Things You Should Know About Nightclub Safety

When patrons head out for an evening at a nightclub, safety is probably not the first thing on their mind! They're looking forward to relaxing, conversing with friends, and maybe enjoy some entertainment along with a beverage and food.

But nightclub disasters around the world have highlighted how important it is for nightclub employees to be aware of their surroundings and to take an active role along with club owners and the city's safety officers in their own safety as well as the patron's safety.

To make sure the evening is a safe one, we offer these tips:

1. Avoid over serving alcohol beverages to patrons.

Alcohol is tied to almost all incidents that arise in nightclubs. Be aware of patron's demeanor as they drink during the night. If they appear to be over-intoxicated you should recommend to the bartender and the waitresses' that they should be cut off from drinking any more alcohol for the night. You should also inform the patron and the individuals within their party. Being smart about the patron's alcohol consumption is so basic to everyone's safety that it can't be overemphasized.

2. Patrons want to feel safe in a nightclub.

Take a look around your club. Are the exits clearly marked or are light bulbs burned out? Are exits adequately lit? Is there adequate emergency lighting provided for all exits in the event of a power outage? (You can tell by the lighting packs that may be mounted on the wall in the exit areas). Are exit paths free and clear, or blocked? This includes ice and snow on the exit path just outside the door that could hamper opening the door or walking away from the building safely. Are any exited doors locked? Are the tables and chairs so crowded that you can't move around? Is there a working emergency sprinkler system. Too many clubs fail to invest in the upkeep of their property for the safety and comfort of their patrons. Remember that if an incident occurs a patron will now think about their safety.

3. Take a look around for one or two other exits visible for patrons (besides the one they entered the club coming in).

- Just as in an aircraft, it's vital to know where the exits are. This may seem elementary, but it is key to everyone in the clubs' survival in case of an emergency – especially since many people don't pay attention to this and may panic.
- Every club should have an emergency evacuation plan and every club employee should know about it and be able to explain it to a patron if asked.

4. Avoid overcrowding the nightclub.

Most of the fights that we have seen in nightclubs can be tied to overcrowding – people who have been drinking, brushing against one another under crowded conditions and getting frustrated and angry. Here's what you can do:

- Ensure that each area in the club has a posted occupancy load sign; for example, the dance floor has a separate occupancy load sign from the bar area. These signs should be easily visible to the employees and patrons.
- Ensure that the club is displaying the responsibility of monitoring and enforcing the maximum occupancy in each area, so the patrons can observe management or Bouncers in each area.
- Keep in mind that the Fire Department conducts random inspections of nightclub to ensure that the limits are being enforced. If patrons our observed standing shoulder-to-shoulder, it's too crowded. The crowd should be reduced immediately.
- If one area is dangerously crowded, the patrons should be asked to move to another area and close off the overcrowded area to new entrants until the crowd reduces. Ensure that this "migration" doesn't result in overcrowding in another area.
- If a patron should complain about overcrowding in the club or a particular area in the club, react immediately and resolve the issue as mentioned above. The patron may also report the overcrowding to the Fire Department who will then follow up with an unannounced inspection.

5. Ensure that all nightclub employees are trained in emergency procedures.

Nightclub employees and staff, including security personnel, should be adequately trained in emergency procedures and able to assist with emergency evacuation. Simply by the way staff members treat the patrons should offer a sense of whether they take their jobs seriously and are likely to be able to help them in an emergency. Patrons should have a positive feeling about the staff.

6. Are there obvious hazards present?

Special effects, such as fireworks/pyrotechnics or candles on the stage, and combustible decorations, require a Fire Department permit to be posted in a conspicuous place.

7. If you feel something dangerous happening, don't ignore it.

Complacency could cost you liability and lawsuits. But also, don't panic. Move quickly but carefully to assist with the emergency evacuation plan.

8. During a Serious problem, get help.

- For help on the spot or to report a dangerous situation, call 911 and the dispatcher will send the appropriate safety personnel.
- For further assistance with emergency and evacuation procedures contact the local Fire Department.

Call: _____

TIPS FOR KEEPNG A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE NIGHTCLUB



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