



COUNTY OF PRINCE WILLIAM

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DEPARTMENT OF
FIRE & RESCUE

Kevin J. McGee
Chief

Night Club Code Compliance and Safety

On 21 February 2003, the 4th largest loss of life in an American night club occurred in West Warwick, Rhode Island. Over 100 people lost their lives and many were injured following a fire ignited by pyrotechnics used by the band playing in the club. Among the contributing factors that caused the large loss of life were overcrowding, no fire suppression systems and no evacuation plan. The purpose of this video is to make business owners and patrons aware of the dangers of overcrowding and improper use of business space. Our goal is to ensure the safety of the citizens and to assist business owners in providing a safe environment for entertainment that is compliant with all zoning and code requirements.

For Patrons:

- Make sure you see signage that indicates the occupancy load of the establishment when you walk in the door; how many people can the room safely hold?
- Note the exits; know two ways out of the building.
- Listen to directions given by the staff of there is an emergency; remain calm.
- If you think the business is overcrowded, call the County's Public Safety Communications Division at 792-6810 or dial 911 and report your concerns.

For Business Owners:

- Ensure that you have the proper occupancy classification. A restaurant is not always automatically a place of assembly that allows for live entertainment, dancing or a DJ. Check with Zoning and the Building Official to make sure you are operating within the law.
- If you do not have the proper occupancy rating, contact Zoning and the Building Official and determine the steps needed to change your occupancy. This may require installing or upgrading fire suppression and alarm systems, changing or adding exits or other structural work.
- Work with the Fire Marshal's Office to develop an emergency evacuation plan and a crowd control plan. You are responsible for limiting the number of people in your business to the rated occupancy load of the premises.
- Train your staff in emergency procedures so they can assist the safe evacuation of the patrons.
- Cooperate with the directions of the Fire Marshal and Police if they visit your club for a spot check or a complaint.

If you have any questions, please contact Captain Ernie Little at 792-6360. The Fire Marshal's Office is always ready to help you comply with the code and to help make the community a safer place to live, work and play.