



Subject: LIFE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR AUDITORIUMS, SCREENING ROOMS AND THEATERS

Policy No. 139

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all New York University academic, commercial and residential facilities with auditoriums, screening rooms, theaters and large facilities with Place of Assembly permits used for groups over 74 persons for other than classroom purposes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is for University facilities used by large groups to comply with all local regulatory requirements (New York City Department of Buildings and the New York City Fire Department) for Places of Assembly.

POLICY AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Quick safe egress of large groups of people from spaces during an emergency requires sufficient exits and orderly evacuation procedures. Regulations require auditoriums, screening rooms, theaters and large facilities with potential occupancies of over 74 persons have a permit for Place of Assembly. Personnel are needed to fulfill egress functions as outlined in this policy.

1.0 Program Responsibilities

- 1.1 The Dean/Vice President or their designated representative in charge of the auditoriums, screening rooms, or theaters will insure the areas of assembly comply with all regulatory requirements when the facilities are in use.
- 1.2 Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) will transmit the necessary information to the responsible parties to insure that the University personnel are knowledgeable regarding regulatory requirements.
- 1.3 Office of Construction Management (OCM) will obtain the necessary Place of Assembly permit from the Department of Buildings.
- 1.4 Facilities Management (FCM) will maintain fire alarm and fire suppression systems, emergency lighting and occupancy signage.
- 1.5 The theater or production manager of the each individual space will insure all personnel have the New York City Fire Department required certificates as Fire Guards, and the operation of the theater fire alarm system. The manager will insure the daily inspection as outlined in sections 8 and 9 of this policy is performed.

2.0 Places of Assembly

ISSUE DATE	REPLACES	ORIGINATOR	APPROVAL
3/05	12/04	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY	SR. VP OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

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- 2.1 All University auditoriums, screening rooms, and theaters with occupancies over 74 persons shall have valid Place of Assembly permits.
- 2.2 OCM will obtain permits for those spaces with occupancies of greater than 74 people and shall provide copies of permits and approved plans to FCM.
 - 2.2.1 Facilities managers will maintain approved seating plans for all facilities with fixed seating including standee areas and advise OCM of any contemplated changes.
 - 2.2.2 FCM shall post occupancy capacities as required by the New York City Building Code as listed on the Place of Assembly permits.
 - 2.2.3 FCM shall maintain a listing of all Places of Assembly locations and will be responsible for the annual Fire Department inspection and renewal of permits.

3.0 Supervision During Performances

- 3.1 Each auditorium, screening room, or theater shall have a House Manager (an NYU employee) present at all times during a performance.
 - 3.1.1 The House Manager must know the location of all exits and the nearest Fire Alarm Pull Station and Phone.
 - 3.1.2 The House Manager must be certified as a Fire Guard by the New York City Fire Department.
- 3.2 There shall be one certified Fire Guards for every 100 people of occupancy.
 - 3.2.1 Fire Guards shall maintain current certification from the New York City Fire Department.
 - 3.2.2 The end user and Public Safety will provide Fire Safety Guards with training on their expected responsibilities during and after performances.
- 3.3 When a theater is used as a classroom fireguards are not required. At the beginning of the semester, a brief fire evacuation plan is to be provided to the class.

4.0 General Life Safety

- 4.1 No fire protection or life safety features are to be tampered with or disabled.
- 4.2 Personal protective equipment shall be used during setup (i.e., safety shoes, eye protection, etc.).
- 4.3 Scenery shall be engineered, constructed and installed (and adequately secured) to provide for the safety of the cast, crew and audience.

5.0 Fire Prevention

- 5.1 No flammable items are permitted. All combustible materials including decorations and fabrics shall be flameproofed. This will be accomplished either by being treated with flame retardant that has a Certificate of Approval from the NYC Fire Department and is applied by

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an individual with the requisite Certificate of Fitness; or manufactured with flameproofing and has an approval from the NYC Fire Department.

5.2 All scenery shall be constructed of treated fire retardant lumber. Where treated wood can not be used, the final product shall be treated using an approved fire retardant material in accordance with New York City regulatory requirements. The application of the fire retardant treatment shall be performed by an individual with the required Certificate of Fitness issued by the New York City Fire Department.

5.3 Use of an open flame during a production requires a permit issued by the New York City Fire Department. The end user will obtain the permit. If necessary the M&O Code Compliance Officer or Environmental Services will assist in obtaining the permit. At least three (3) weeks prior notice must be provided.

6.0 Lighting

6.1 Lighting equipment and other rigging over the audience seating area is discouraged.

6.2 Lighting equipment or rigging shall not be affixed to sprinkler piping.

6.3 No cables or equipment may run through or across aisles or exitways.

6.3 All lighting equipment must have a safety wire secured through the yoke to the supporting structure.

6.4 Lighting fixtures without lenses shall have a safety screen secured in front of the exposed lamp.

6.5 All top-heavy lighting towers shall be secured at the top (by securing to the overhead grid or a permanent overhead fixture) and secured or weighted at the bottom.

7.0 Seating

7.1 The Occupant Load may not exceed the capacity limits of the Permit of Assembly for the space.

7.2 For movable seating:

7.2.1 All aisles shall be 44" wide and lead to a cross aisle that leads directly to an exit.

7.2.2 No dead end aisles shall exceed 20' in length, from seat to a cross aisle or exit.

7.2.3 Rows of seats, opening onto an aisle at one end shall have no more than seven (7) seats. Rows of seats opening onto an aisle at both ends shall have no more than fourteen (14) seats.

7.2.4 Seats shall be spaced with a minimum of 12" from the back of one row to the front of the next.

7.2.5 All chairs must be fastened together into rows. There shall be no makeshift or bleacher seating.

8.0 The House Manager is required to maintain a "Theater Inspection Log Book" as per the stipulations of Title 31 §31-04 of the New York City Fire Code. (Section copied directly from Title 31 §31-04.)

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- 8.1 Specifications for book
- Bound book with pen ruled lines and red ruled margin;
 - Pages to be 8¹/₂" x 11", and consecutively numbered on the top at the corner;
 - The face of the cover shall have a copy of the "Theatre Inspection Guide" (see section 8) affixed.
- 8.2 Daily entries in the journal are to be made by New York University House Managers as per the following samples, whichever applies;
- *Date and time.* Mr. John Doe, Manager, inspected all parts of theatre in accordance with stipulations of the Fire Department "Theatre Inspection Guide" and found all applicable items complied with and/or in good condition.

Certified standpipe operator on duty (where applicable)

Mr. _____ Certificate No. _____

Person designated to prevent any undue excitement or possible panic conditions:

Mr. _____

Nearest street fire box corner of _____ and _____

Signed: John Doe – Title

or

- *Date and time.* Mr. John Doe, Manager, inspected all parts of theatre in accordance with stipulations of the Fire Department "Theatre Inspection Guide" and found all applicable items complied with, except the following: (Indicate conditions referred to and action taken, e.g. exit lights over north side door out-bulb replace, etc.).

Certified standpipe operator on duty (where applicable):

Mr. _____ Certificate No. _____

Person designated to prevent any undue excitement or possible panic conditions:

Mr. _____

Nearest street fire box corner of _____ and _____

Signed: John Doe – Title

- 8.3 The book shall be used for no other purpose and shall be kept in the manager's office for inspection by members of this Department (New York City Fire Department). Failure to maintain this book as indicated will result in the service of a violation order (from the Fire Department).

New York City Fire Department Chief or officers, when making visits, investigating complaints, etc. shall examine subsequent entries made in the "Theater Inspection Log Book", since the previous inspection was made by a chief officer, and shall record the results of such examinations therein; also condition found and action taken if required.

All other New York City Fire Department members inspecting theatres shall enter their name, purpose of visit and action taken if required.

- 9.0 *Theater inspection guide* (Section copied directly from Title 31 §31-04 of the New York City Fire Code.)

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- Note the location of street fire alarm box nearest to stage door for immediate transmission of alarms of fire.
- Building alarm box on stage shall be tested daily and prior to each performance and maintained in proper working order at all times. This alarm may be transmitted in addition to street fire alarm box. Telephone on premises may also be used to transmit alarm.
- Inspect all emergency exits, stairways, courts and passageways to determine condition, availability for use and compliance with law.
- Cause "asbestos" curtain to be lowered at the close of each performance.
- Examine all automatic fire doors to determine operative condition and availability for use.
- Inspect all portions of standpipe and sprinkler systems, including pumps and tanks; also all fire appliances to determine condition and readiness for immediate use. Certified standpipe operator shall be present at all times when theatre is open to the public.
- Report unserviceable standpipe and sprinkler systems, to officer of company (Fire Department) in whose district theatre is located.
- Examine automatic skylight to determine operative condition and readiness for use.
- Inspect all parts of theatre, particularly backstage and under the stage for accumulations of rubbish, and maintain free of same at all times.
- Require all doors in proscenium will to be kept closed during performances.
- Prohibit smoking in all portions of the theatre.
- Require necessary extinguishers to be readily available when materials of a hazardous nature are used in performance.
- Required Fire Department permits shall be obtained and kept available for inspection.
- Require necessary precautions to be taken when articles of a hazardous nature are used.