

Maryland State Fire Marshal

News Release

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Governor

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MARYLANDERS ARE REMINDED TO BE AWARE OF POTENTIAL FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY ISSUES WHEN PATRONIZING NIGHTCLUBS AND OTHER EVENTS

PIKESVILLE, MD (January 31, 2013) – The State Fire Marshal William E. Barnard is reminding all Marylanders to perform a safety evaluation of their surroundings when entering social gathering hotspots. *“It is everyone’s responsibility to be alert and aware of basic safety measures in the event a tragedy occurs,”* stated Barnard. On occasion the unexpected happens: a large fire, earthquake, extreme weather phenomenon or even an act of terrorism can quickly change the planned events of the day. What was once a routine trip to the club is now a tragic memory of how it used to be!

The recent fire at the ‘Kiss’ nightclub in Santa Maria, Brazil, was a disaster of historical proportion and serves as a grim reminder of the importance of proper fire safety measures. Over 230 people lost their lives as result of poor judgment and lack of proper egress from the building. In February, 2003, 100 people died in the ‘Station’ nightclub fire in West Warwick, Rhode Island during a musical presentation by the band, “Great White” resulting from the use of pyrotechnics. Citizens entering any public assembly building should be prepared in case an emergency occurs. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has prepared a short list of basic guidelines to be aware of when frequenting an entertainment venue.

Should you enter?

Take a good look.

Does the building appear to be in a properly maintained condition that makes you feel comfortable? Is the main entrance clear of obstructions and does it open outward to allow an easy exit? Is the outside area clear of materials that could block exits?

Before you enter:

Have a communication plan.

Identify a relative or friend beforehand to contact in case an emergency occurs and you are separated from family or friends.

Plan a meeting place.

Pick a meeting place outside to meet family or friends with whom you are attending the activity. If there is an emergency, be sure to meet them at the specified location.

When you enter:

Locate exits immediately.

When you enter a building, immediately locate all available exits. Are the exits clearly marked and well lit? Always be prepared to use the exit closest to you. (You may not be able to use the main exit.)

Check for clear exit paths.

Make sure aisles are wide enough and unobstructed by chairs or furniture. Check to make sure your exit door is not blocked or chained. If there are not at least two clearly marked exits, or exit paths are blocked, report the violation to management and leave the building if it is not immediately addressed. Call the local fire marshal to register a complaint.

Do you feel safe?

Does the building appear to be overcrowded? Are there fire sources such as candles burning, cigarettes or cigars burning, pyrotechnics, or other heat sources that may make you feel unsafe? Are there safety systems in place such as alternative exits, fire sprinklers, and fire alarms? Ask the management for clarification of your concerns. If you do not feel safe in the building, leave immediately.

During an emergency:

React immediately.

If a fire alarm alerts; you see smoke or fire; or any other dangerous disturbances present themselves, immediately exit the building in an orderly fashion. Use your closest exit, keeping in mind that it may not necessarily be the main exit.

Get out, stay out!

Once you have escaped, stay out. Under no circumstances should you ever go back into the building before it is rendered safe to do so. Let trained first responders conduct incident operations.

Take the time to learn about the public assembly buildings you may frequent, so that you know what to do if the unexpected happens.



The Office of the State Fire Marshal is an agency of the Department of State Police dedicated to helping protect citizens from fire and explosion through a comprehensive program of education, inspection, investigation and fire protection engineering. For more information on fire safety call 1-800-525-3124, log onto our website at: www.mdsp.org/firemarshal and/or <http://facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal>.

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