

7. If you feel something dangerous happening, don't ignore it.
Complacency could cost you dearly. But also, don't panic. Move quickly but carefully toward the nearest exit.
8. If there's 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.
 - To report a problem—overcrowding, blocked exits, whatever—contact the Fire Prevention and Investigation Division during working hours (7:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.):

Call 720-913-3474 or e-mail denfbp@denvergov.org.



LARRY W. TRUJILLO
Chief of Fire Department



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

Tips for Keeping Your Nightclub Experience Safe & Fun



from the Denver Fire Department

Eight Things to Know About Nightclub Safety

When you head out for an evening at a nightclub, safety is probably not the first thing on your mind! You're looking forward to relaxing, chatting with friends, and maybe enjoying some entertainment along with a beverage and snack.

But nightclub disasters in other cities have highlighted how important it is for nightclub patrons 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. Fortunately, Denver has an excellent record for fire safety in nightclubs. We want to keep it that way.

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

1. Know your limits and have a designated driver.

Alcohol is tied to almost all the problems that arise in night spots. It isn't really our department, but being smart about your alcohol consumption is so basic to your safety that it can't be overemphasized.

2. Only patronize clubs that are well maintained and feel safe.

Take a look around. Are the exits clearly marked or are light bulbs burned out? Are exits adequately lit? Is adequate emergency lighting provided for all exits in the event of power outage? (You can tell by the lighting packs 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 exit doors locked? Are the tables and chairs so crowded that you can't move around? Are there sprinklers? Too many clubs fail to invest in the upkeep of their property for the safety and comfort of their patrons. Don't patronize these clubs, and let the management know why.

3. Take a look around and find one or two other exits (besides the one you used 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 your 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. If in doubt, ask. If the staff doesn't know about it, take your business elsewhere.

4. Don't put up with overcrowding.

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:

- 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 you, the patron. If they aren't, talk to the owner or choose a different nightclub.
- It is the club owner's responsibility to monitor and enforce the maximum occupancy in each area, so you should see management or security/bouncers in each area.
- Even though the Fire Department conducts random inspections to ensure that the limits are being enforced, there's no guarantee that the room you are in is in compliance right now. If you see people standing shoulder-to-shoulder, it's too crowded. Talk to the management.
- If one area is dangerously crowded, the management should ask people to move to another area and close off the overcrowded area to new entrants until the crowd thins out. They must also ensure that this "migration" doesn't result in overcrowding in another area.
- If you talk to the management about overcrowding and they don't do anything about it, leave—and let the Fire Department know about it. We'll follow up with an inspection.

5. Take a look at the staff.

Nightclub employees and staff, including bouncers and security personnel, should be adequately trained in emergency procedures and able to assist with emergency evacuation. While we don't expect you to ask anyone for their resume, you will get a sense from the way staff members treat you and other patrons as to whether they take their jobs seriously and are likely to be able to help you in an emergency. Only patronize clubs where you have a good feeling about the staff.

6. Are there obvious hazards present?

Special effects, such as fireworks/pyrotechnics or candles on stage, and combustible decorations, require a Fire Department permit to be posted in a conspicuous place. If you see such a hazard and no permit, ask the management about it.

continued next page