

Your Safety: Public Assembly

Every day, millions of people wake up, go to work or school, and take part in social events. But every so often the unexpected happens: a fire, a chemical spill, an act of terrorism or some other disaster. Routines change drastically, and people are suddenly aware of how fragile their lives and routines can be. Each disaster can have lasting effects - people may be seriously injured or killed, and devastating and costly property damage can occur.

Should you enter?

Take a good look

Does the building appear to be in a condition that makes you feel comfortable?

Is the main entrance wide and does it open outward to allow easy exit?

Is the outside area clear of materials stored against the building or blocking exits?

Before you enter

Have a communication plan

Identify a relative or friend beforehand to contact in case of emergency 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 function. If there is an emergency, be sure to meet them there.

When you enter

Locate exits immediately

When you enter a building look for all available exits. Are the exits clearly marked and well lit? Some exits may be in front and some in back of you. 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 not obstructed 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, sprinklers, and smoke alarms?

Ask the management for clarification on your concerns. If you do not feel safe in the building, leave immediately.

During an emergency

React immediately

If an alarm sounds, you see smoke or fire, or other unusual disturbances immediately exit the building in an orderly fashion. Use your closest exit – keep in mind that it may not be the main exit.

Get out, stay out!

Once you have escaped, stay out. Under no circumstances should you ever go back into a burning building. Let trained firefighters conduct rescue operations.

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

This data sheet has been provided as a public service by

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