



Town of Plymouth
Fire Department
Fire Prevention & Code Compliance Division
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Plymouth, Massachusetts 02360
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The mission of the Plymouth Fire Department Fire Prevention Division is to promote public safety by limiting the occurrence of fire, identifying conditions that may lead to ignition and abating hazards that jeopardize public safety. This is primarily accomplished through public fire safety education, enforcement of the Commonwealth's fire codes and regulations, Town By-Laws, and through inspections, plan review and permitting.

**Plymouth Fire Department
2023 Alcohol License Renewal Inspection
Information Packet**

The Plymouth Fire Department Fire Prevention Division has prepared this information packet to assist alcohol license holders in understanding the process involved with completing the fire inspection portion for alcohol license renewal. License holders are expected to complete the attached inspection request form and pay the inspection fee prior to the inspection. Please make your check payable to the Town of Plymouth and mail or deliver to Plymouth Fire Department, 114 Sandwich Street, Plymouth MA 02360.

The content of the inspection and fire department expectations of license holders are discussed in the following pages.

Fire Department Involvement in Alcohol License Renewal

The General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through legislation covered in the Acts of 2004 Chapter 304, provided municipal fire departments with the authority to enter, inspect, and provide input to license renewal of businesses serving alcohol on premises. Chapter 304 was written in response to the tragedy at the Station Nightclub in Rhode Island.

Plymouth Fire Department Alcohol License Renewal Inspection

As indicated in our mission statement, we seek a cooperative alliance with business owners to provide a safe environment for patrons. We conduct alcohol license renewal inspections annually. This year they will occur Monday through Friday during October and November. The inspections are intentionally unannounced. Please do not call for an appointment. If circumstances necessitate advance scheduling, please contact Lieutenant Marc Helminiak to discuss options. If the facility and its staff are too busy to accommodate the Inspector, a return visit will occur. If unable to complete the inspection on the second visit an additional Inspection Fee of \$100 must be paid.

The Plymouth Fire Department seeks to preclude any situation that may lead to a loss of license or result in the closure of a business, even temporarily. Please feel free to contact our office if there are concerns or if assistance is required understanding the inspection requirements.

Inspection Source Documents

The Plymouth Fire Department performs inspections in those facilities holding a license to serve alcohol in accordance with the requirements contained in Massachusetts General Law Chapter 10 subsection 74. Inspection criteria for fire and life safety are provided in Massachusetts General Law Chapter 148 and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations 527 CMR1.

This informational packet has been prepared to inform businesses serving alcohol on premises, what to expect during the Fire Department's inspection. Town of Plymouth Inspectional Services will conduct a separate inspection utilizing different regulatory sources. There is some overlap in our inspection criteria. Your understanding and cooperation is appreciated.

Inspection Fee

The Plymouth Fire Department charges a \$100 fee for each alcohol license renewal application Certificate of Inspection (some facilities have multiple certificates for various areas within the property). This must be paid prior to inspection. Checks shall be made out to the Town of Plymouth. An additional fee of \$100 for each separate Certificate of Inspection may be required if the inspection is not completed within two visits.

Facilities Operating with a Memorandum of Understanding

There are some facilities operating with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Town of Plymouth regarding certain safety enhancements in lieu of sprinklers. In addition to the requirements outlined in this packet, the items agreed to in the MOU will be subject to inclusion for the inspection. Failure to abide by the requirements may result in an immediate order to add sprinklers or denial of alcohol license.

The Inspection – Introduction and Administrative Review

A uniformed member of the Plymouth Fire Department Fire Prevention Division will enter the premises during regular posted business hours and ask for the owner or manager. We will explain our presence and ask for permission to complete our inspection. **An escort through the premises is required. The escort will be asked to operate emergency lights and exit doors. Fire Department personnel will not operate equipment or devices that belong to the facility.**

The inspection begins with a review of required documentation. It is expected that the following documentation is readily available for our review at time of inspection. **Copies of each of the documents listed and discussed on the next few pages must be provided to the Fire Inspector at the time of inspection.** The documents must also be maintained and updated yearly by the facility owner. These documents are subject to on-premises inspection at all times during the year.

Certificate of Inspection properly posted {527CMR1 10.17 (1) (b) (c)}

This document must be prominently displayed at the main entrance to the facility. It must be signed by the Building Inspector and the Fire Chief. The signatures must be less than 1 year old.

Documentation present for regulated seating {527CMR1 29}

This information is printed on the certificate of inspection.

Flame retardant compliance of furnishings {527CMR1 21}

Seat cushions (greater than one inch in height), tablecloths, cloth napkins etc must be treated by a fire-retardant process. Most commercial furnishings are fire retardant and have paperwork or tags attesting to same. The most common test methodologies cited are California (Cal) 133 or 117. Cal 133 is acceptable for use in facilities that are not protected by sprinklers. Cal 117 is acceptable in facilities that are protected by sprinklers. Depending upon the facility, either may be acceptable to comply with Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations. Some products may also be Underwriters Laboratory listed or Factory Mutual approved as fire retardant. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Plymouth Fire Department. Proper documentation is required to complete the review.

There are products that facility owners can purchase from local retailers that are applied to furnishing to make them compliant with the Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations. Consult your local yellow pages for companies that clean and repair carpets, rugs or upholstery to find a supplier.

If the facility owner chooses to self-apply a commercially available fire-retardant treatment, the Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations requires submittal of a letter from the facility owner to the Plymouth Fire Department attesting to the product used, application method, and products/items treated by this process. Additionally, a sample of the treated material may be requested for testing by the Plymouth Fire Department.

Flame retardant compliance of decorations {527CMR1 21}

Decorations require paperwork or tags attesting to the fire-retardant properties of the item. Examples of decorations:

Plants – Artificial plants require either an Underwriters Laboratory tag attesting to fire retardant treatment, or the facility owner may apply a commercial fire-retardant product. Live plantings are expected to be watered and not dried out. The location of either live or artificial plants must not obstruct or hinder a means of egress or allow for the spread of fire.

Banners, posters, or other wall coverings must be fire retardant or treated with a fire-retardant product. They must not be placed in an egress pathway.

There are products that facility owners can purchase from local retailers that are applied to decoration to make them compliant with the Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations. Consult your local yellow pages for companies that clean and repair carpets, rugs, or upholstery to find a supplier.

If the facility owner chooses to self-apply a commercially available fire-retardant treatment, the Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations requires submittal of a letter from the facility owner to the Plymouth Fire Department attesting to the product used, application method, and products/items treated by this process. Additionally, a sample of the treated material may be requested for testing by the Plymouth Fire Department.

Seasonal decorations require a permit from the Plymouth Fire Department. The permit must be obtained for each separate holiday season. Decorations must be fire retardant and not interfere with exit ways. Live Christmas Trees, wreaths, straw/hay, corn stalks etc are not permitted inside the building.

Open flame candles are acceptable for use in facilities that are protected with an operable sprinkler system. It is expected that candles will be placed on stable heat resistive bases and not located in proximity to potentially combustible materials such as window treatments or table decorations.

Decorations shall not hang from or otherwise obstruct or hinder sprinkler system operation or exit signs and pathways.

Employee emergency procedure training {527CMR1 10.13(2)(a)}

Employees must be trained in emergency evacuation procedures. A written outline of the training program and attendance records must be maintained by the facility and a copy be provided to the Fire Department.

Egress plan {527CMR1 10.13(2)(b)}

Each facility must develop a written egress plan. A diagram of the facility is required. The diagram can be hand drawn. The location of required exits and other points that may serve as an exit in an emergency shall be indicated on the drawing. This drawing should be used as part of the facility's employee emergency training program. A copy of the plan must be submitted to the Fire Department.

Sprinkler system inspection/test {527CMR 1 10.03 (8) (e)}

A copy of the most recent sprinkler inspection and test report from a licensed sprinkler contractor shall be available. A copy of this report shall be provided to the Fire Department. The system must be tested and inspected annually.

Fire alarm system inspection/test {527CMR1 10.03 (8) (e)}

A copy of the most recent fire alarm NFPA 25 test report from a licensed fire alarm contractor or electrician shall be available. A copy of this report shall be provided to the Fire Department. The system must be tested and inspected annually.

The Inspection – Facility Review

At the conclusion of the document review portion of the inspection, a field inspection will commence. As observed by the following legal citation, means of egress will be a predominant aspect of the inspection. It is recommended that the escort record findings for later review by the facility owner.

- ***All means of egress unobstructed and suited for immediate use {527CMR1 10.03(1), 10.03(13)(a), 10.17(4)(a) and 25.05, 25.09}***
- ***All exit doors operable {527CMR1 10.17(4)(b) and 25.05, 25.09}***
- ***All interior and exterior ingress and egress routes are unobstructed {527CMR1 10.17(4)(d) and 25.05, 25.09},***
- ***In rooms with chairs and tables, aisles to egress door are a minimum of 44" clear width {527CMR1 10.17(4)(c)}***
- ***All exit sign lighting operable {527CMR1 10.17(4)(e)}***
- ***Emergency lighting of means of egress operable {527CMR1 10.17(4)(e)}***
- ***Exterior stairways and fire escapes free of snow, ice and obstructions {527CMR1 10.03(13)(d)}***

Maintenance of means of egress is perhaps the most important obligation of the facility owner. Despite our best efforts to minimize the occurrence of fire, an emergency requiring a rapid orderly evacuation of the facility is still possible. To that end the Massachusetts Board of Fire Regulations allows for the consideration of other means of egress when performing an inspection. It is reasonable to believe that each means of egress has been identified and posted for your facility. The Station Night Club fire has

indicated that persons facing harm in an emergency will utilize any means possible to exit the facility. Our inspection will consider that possibility as we examine your facility.

An egress is comprised of three parts, the flow into the doorway or opening, the opening, and the area outside the opening. As part of your inspection each part of the egress will be examined. The devices used to indicate the location of exits (signs) and illuminate pathways (emergency lights) comprise flow into the egress opening. These devices shall be in working order and tested by the facility representative during the inspection. Exit door operability is determined by applying not more than 15 pounds of force to the panic hardware causing the latch to release, opening the door. The door must open fully providing required width for patron egress. Not all exit doors will require panic hardware. The door must open easily and fully to meet required patron egress capabilities. The operability of the exit door will be tested by a facility representative during the inspection.

The Inspector will observe for hindrances and obstructions in each part of the egress route. Findings may require immediate corrective action to preclude sanctions that may include denial of patron access. Diligence by facility owners and employees maintaining unobstructed egress is always expected. Common examples of items that obstruct or hinder egress are:

- Plants
- Decorations
- Curtains and drapes
- Tables and chairs
- Dais used to greet arriving patrons
- Storage of trash or other material
- Doors that open against the expect flow of egress

Kitchen area screen doors used to facilitate air exchange and comply with health code regulations are a commonly observed egress obstruction during an inspection. To comply with fire codes, they must open outward in the direction of travel for egress. Doors that open inward against the flow of travel for egress present a hindrance to employees and occupants.

***Fire extinguishers properly maintained and within inspection date:
{527CMR1 10.02(1)}***

The Building Inspector determines the types and locations of fire extinguishers for each facility. The Fire Department observes that fire extinguishers are properly maintained and inspected by persons certified in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This includes fire extinguishers used for protecting kitchen hoods and cooking surfaces. Fire extinguishers must have a tag indicating the name of the company or individual providing the inspection and maintenance services. The extinguisher shall have been inspected within the past 12 months.

Kitchen hoods are expected to have a label affixed to each hood indicating the name of the company providing cleaning services. The label shall also indicate the date the hood and vent were last cleaned and inspected and the date the next cleaning and inspection will occur.

General observations will be made for:

- General housekeeping
- General electrical hazards including use of extension cords
- Other code violations including health codes.

The walkthrough will involve a review of exits, aisle widths, seating arrangements, fire system physical condition, and overall fire safety requirements. Finally, a few minutes will be required to discuss observations and required corrective actions. Required corrective actions will be scheduled for completion based on level of risk and mutual agreement between the Fire Department and property representative. The schedule for completion will be open to discussion at any time. Mutual communication is beneficial for both sides. If a follow-up visit is required, it will be scheduled at this time or can be deferred to a later date.

Certificate of Inspection Signature

To obtain a signature from the Chief of the Plymouth Fire Department the following must be completed:

- Inspection fee paid.
- Inspection completed successfully with no unresolved life safety corrective actions.
- Photocopy of the current Certificate of Inspection signed by Inspectional Services and the Fire Chief.

Once this has been completed, Lisa Johnson will be notified that the fire inspection requirements have been completed as part of the renewal application.