

DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS <b>CODE BULLETIN OF INFORMATION</b> <b>No. F-0103</b>		CODE OF GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA <hr/> TITLE 4 — BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPANCY CODE
SUBJECT OF BULLETIN:  <b>LAWFUL OCCUPANCY POSTING  FOR OUTDOOR ASSEMBLY</b>		REFERENCE CODE SECTION(S):  F-1004.3 B-1004.3
ISSUED BY		
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TITLES: Director of Planning and Code Development, Dept. of Licenses and Inspections Chief, Fire Code Unit, Fire Department		PAGE 1 OF 2

**BACKGROUND:**

The Department of Licenses and Inspections issues Lawful Occupancy signs for assembly spaces. Traditionally, signs have only been issued for enclosed spaces such as buildings and tents. The primary purpose of the Lawful Occupancy sign is to limit the number of occupants to the available safe egress width.

**ISSUE:**

Decks, piers and other outdoor assembly spaces have historically not been posted for the maximum occupant load because they are not enclosed spaces. In some of these spaces, particularly assembly uses on piers and other waterfront structures, there will be a sufficient number and capacity of exits from buildings at the location, but there may be insufficient egress width leading to a public way beside the building. The problem occurs when there is simultaneous occupancy of the outdoor space and the building. The occupants of the outdoor space have not been counted, nor has a maximum occupant load been posted for the space based on available paths of egress. A fire or other emergency situation involving either the building or the open space will result in a mass exodus from the space. Inadequate egress passageways between buildings and pier edge, or other such restrictions will significantly increase the time it takes to reach the public way.

**DIRECTION:**

Section F-1004.3 of the Philadelphia Fire Prevention Code states in part “An assembly occupancy shall be posted with an approved legible sign...” Similarly, Section B-1004.3 of the Philadelphia Building Code states in part “Every room or space that is an assembly occupancy shall have the approved occupant load of the room or space posted in a conspicuous place...”

Outdoor assembly areas (A-2 or A-3) on piers, decks, or similar spaces in which the means of egress is restricted by passageways, gates, etc. such that the immediate dispersal of occupants is not possible, shall be posted for the maximum occupant load based on the available width of such egress restrictions. The occupant load in this case shall be based on five persons per inch of clear egress width (0.2 inches per occupant).

Where all or part of the egress is through a building, the means of egress requirements for the building shall be based on the sum of the occupant load of the building plus the outdoor area. In this case the egress capacity shall be determined using Building Code Table B-1004.1.1.

Outdoor assembly areas of the type discussed above shall apply to the Permit Services Division for a Lawful Occupancy sign. The plan examiner will use the normal procedure for determining the approved occupancy. The area of the space and the type of assembly use will determine the maximum load, but this number cannot exceed the capacity of the available egress paths.

Where an inspector identifies an outdoor assembly space without the required Lawful Occupancy sign, a violation shall be written under Section F-1004.3 of the Fire Prevention Code.