

**DIRECTORATE OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES ISSUES FIRE,
LIFE SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR ALL OCCUPANCIES**

Panaji: December 17, 2025

Considering the recent fire incidents that resulted in the tragic loss of lives, the Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services has issued a circular to all occupancies/establishments for the implementation of fire and life safety guidelines. These advisories are derived from the relevant department issued Notifications mandating the installation and maintenance of fire protection systems for specified occupancies. The guidelines represent minimum safety measures; occupancies/establishments must comply with any additional requirements issued by the Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) or other competent authorities based on the nature and degree of the fire hazard.

Statutory compliance: All occupancies shall obtain and maintain a Fire No Objection Certificate as required under Goa Fire Force Act 1986 & Rules 1997. Compliance of the Fire safety is mandatory, including provisions related to fire prevention, building services, egress design, active fire protection systems, and life-safety features. Any modifications to building layouts, structural elements, interior works, fire systems or means of escape must be intimated to DFES for approval prior to execution. Establishments must maintain updated records such as maintenance of logs, fire drill registers, electrical audit certificates, and equipment service reports for inspection. Trade licenses and occupancy certificates shall remain valid only when supported by current fire clearance.

Fire prevention measures: All access routes, corridors, staircases, and escape paths must be kept free of obstructions or storage. Combustible interior finishes should be limited, and materials used for partitions, furnishings and decor must be fire-retardant. Strict housekeeping practices shall be followed to avoid accumulation of combustible waste and reduce fuel load. Electrical installations must conform to IS standards, with prevention of overloading, proper earthing, and prohibition of unauthorized wiring. Annual electrical safety inspections by licensed professionals are mandatory for fire-prone occupancies. Hazard-prone activities such as fireworks, pyrotechnics, open-flame operations, or hot-work shall not be conducted unsupervised. LPG storage and gas piping systems shall comply with IS:6044 (Part-1) requirements and undergo regular leak testing.

Fire protection and detection systems: All occupancies must install appropriate fire detection and protection systems. Automatic smoke and heat detectors shall be provided based on occupancy risk, supported by addressable or automatic fire alarm systems with manual call points and audible alarms on each floor, including basements, with 24-hour battery backup. Automatic sprinkler systems must be installed in accordance with NBC norms, particularly in high-rise buildings, assembly areas, commercial kitchens, basements, and storage zones. Wet-riser or down-comer systems, fire service inlet connections, and dedicated fire water storage (UG and OH tanks) with main, standby and jockey pumps shall be kept functional with weekly testing and documented maintenance. ISI-marked portable extinguishers of suitable types must be provided throughout the premises and maintained through regular inspections. Smoke control measures, such as mechanical extraction in basements and

fire rated dampers in HVAC systems, must be maintained to prevent smoke movement during emergencies.

Life safety measures: Emergency signage, floor-wise escape diagrams and illuminated directional indicators must be provided along exit routes. Staircases shall be kept smoke-free through natural or mechanical pressurization as applicable. Fire-rated doors must always be operational, kept closed to prevent smoke spread and maintained against damage. Emergency lighting with at least 90 minutes of battery backup must be provided in all escape paths and high-risk areas to enable safe evacuation during power failures. Occupant load must be controlled, especially in assembly halls, banquet areas, entertainment venues, and bars, to avoid overcrowding. Special consideration shall be given to evacuation of vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, differently-abled individuals, and visitors unfamiliar with the building layout.

Means of escape (egress): All occupancies must provide a minimum of two remote exits per floor or compartment. Exits shall remain unobstructed, unlocked and readily be able to be opened during hours of operation. Escape corridors must be free from combustible storage or furniture. Staircases shall conform to NBC width requirements and be enclosed with appropriate fire-rated construction to serve as protected escape paths. Illuminated EXIT signage and directional signs must be installed along all escape routes. Maximum occupant load for assembly and public areas must be prominently displayed at entry points and strictly enforced.

Emergency preparedness: Each establishment shall maintain a Fire & Emergency Response Plan outlining fire reporting procedures, evacuation protocols, assembly point locations, headcount methods, communication systems, and coordination with DFES. Trained personnel must be designated for activation of alarms, supervision of evacuation, use of firefighting equipment and crowd management. Fire service access roads must remain unobstructed, and regular checks must be carried out on emergency exits, fire alarm systems, pumps, and lighting systems to ensure operational readiness.

Fire safety awareness trainings and fire drills: Periodic training and drills shall be carried out to ensure occupant preparedness. Establishments shall conduct quarterly fire and evacuation drills simulating realistic scenarios, including night-time drills in occupancies such as hotels, hostels, and residential institutions. All staff members must be trained in the safe use of fire extinguishers, activation of alarm systems and procedures for assisting vulnerable occupants. Fire Wardens, security personnel, and crowd managers must receive periodic refresher training. Records of all trainings and drills shall be maintained and made available during fire prevention inspections.

Management responsibility: Owners, occupiers, and facility managers/ establishment management shall ensure continuous maintenance, testing and certification of all fire detection, protection, and life-safety installations. Any deficiencies identified during inspections must be rectified immediately. Management shall maintain updated occupant load calculations, emergency contacts, and equipment service schedules. No structural or interior modification affecting fire-stopping, compartmentation, exits, ventilation, or fire system performance shall be carried out without DFES approval. Establishments must enforce strict compliance with fire safety requirements across employees, contractors, tenants, and event organizers.

Local licensing authorities: Local licensing authorities shall ensure strict enforcement of all applicable fire safety regulations for establishments seeking or holding licenses to operate. They must verify the validity of the Fire Safety NOC as a prerequisite for issuing or renewing any trade, occupancy, or operational license. Authorities shall promptly notify the Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services of any observed unsafe practices, violations, or hazardous conditions within their jurisdictions. Establishments found operating without a valid Fire Safety NOC, or those failing to comply with mandated fire safety provisions, shall be liable for suspension or revocation of their licenses in accordance with statutory requirements. Fire and life safety is a shared responsibility. Effective prevention, preparedness, and compliance can significantly reduce risks and protect lives. All establishments are urged to treat these guidelines as a continuing obligation rather than a one-time requirement.

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