

ADVERTISEMENT



Do you have that
BURN TO LEARN?
ONLINE MASTER'S in FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEERING

NFPA.ORG HOME CODES & STANDARDS NEWS & RESEARCH TRAINING & EVENTS PUBLIC EDUCATION MEMBERSHIP CATALOG SIGN-IN |  CART (0)

Official magazine of the
National Fire Protection Association

NFPA Journal® Search: >

JOURNAL HOME

ARCHIVED ISSUES
JOURNAL MOBILE APP
ADVERTISING
AUTHOR INDEX
SUBJECT INDEX
CONTENT
DISCLAIMER
ABOUT NFPA JOURNAL

NFPA.ORG

ADVERTISEMENT



FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEERING

ONLINE STUDIES

START A NEW CAREER

UPGRADE YOUR SKILLS

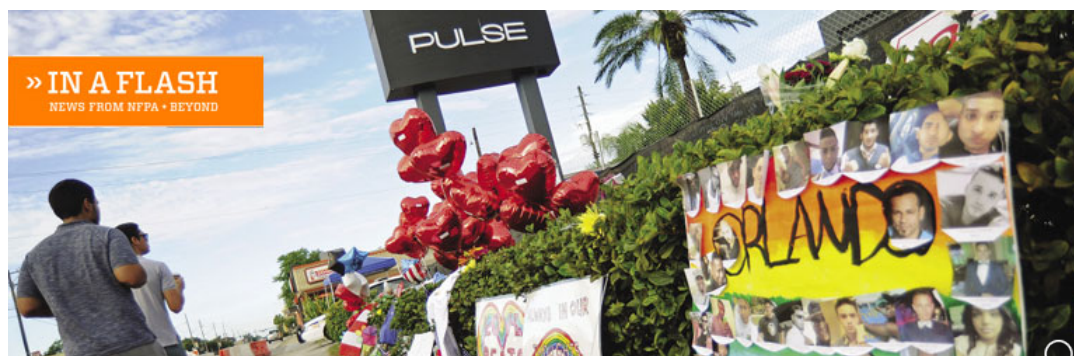
100% WEB BASED

WORLD CLASS FACULTY

DESIGNED FOR WORKING ENGINEERS

APPLY TODAY

[News & Research](#) / [Publications](#) / [NFPA Journal®](#) / [2016](#) / [July August 2016](#) / [July August 2016](#) / [In A Flash](#) / [Train the Shepherds](#)



. Author(s): Steven A Adelman. Published on July 1, 2016.

Train the Shepherds

In the aftermath of the Orlando shootings, a reminder of why crowd management training is essential for venues

BY STEVEN A. ADELMAN

Editor's note: Research and historical events have demonstrated that many of us become immobile in emergencies. While roughly 10 percent of people manage to keep their wits about them and act in a rational manner, 80 percent tend to become confused and largely inactive, while another 10 percent become hysterical or irrational. Typically, about 90 percent of event attendees will need to be led, or require some kind of assistance, in an emergency. The author of the NFPA fire investigation for the Up Stairs Lounge, for example, noted in 1974 that "survivors described the frustration of trying to persuade more people to move toward the rear door, instead of sitting or standing where they were. Whether this lack of action was because initial shock created an inability to react to the threat is not known. Panic resulted when those who had stayed behind ran for the windows. Their bodies were found stacked in front of the only visible means of escape."

This is just one reason why training crowd managers to handle emergencies is critically important, according to Steven A. Adelman, an event and venue safety expert. Adelman is head of Adelman Law Group in Scottsdale, Arizona, specializing in safety and security in sporting and entertainment venues across North America, and is vice-president of the [Event Safety Alliance](#). The following is an excerpt from an article that will appear in July in Protocol, the journal of the Entertainment Services and Technology Association, which is [available online to read](#).

Generally speaking, I am all for individual empowerment. I prefer not to have to rely on others for my own well-being. That's probably why I have made a career working on life safety issues. But radical self-reliance doesn't work well for live event venues. Here's why.

In several important respects, crowds at live events are different from groups of office workers or school employees, who until recently have been the primary recipients of "Run, Hide, Fight" training. In addition to the fact that most event venues are loud, and many are dark, most people in attendance don't know each other, and they don't know the venue well, either. Moreover, it is common, in my experience at least, for people going to a game or a show to let down their guard, to become even less situationally aware than usual—use of controlled substances intended to enhance the experience can further impair people's ability to perceive and respond to frightening and unexpected stimulus. Nearly every aspect of attendance at a live event conspires to deprive us of information necessary to make good safety decisions on our own.

These are the reasons the law imposes on the operators of public accommodations a duty of reasonable care for business invitees—we invited them to our house. The corollary to that is that most event patrons will naturally look to the people in charge of that event for guidance in an emergency.

In other words, in the live event industry, it is not merely that there is one group of people divided by emergency response capability into strata of 10-80-10; there are two—the operations professionals, who at least know the venue when the lights are up and the speakers are quiet, and the guests, all of whom are less prepared to respond to an emergency in that venue than the people who work there. This is why crowd management training is essential.

Fortunately, this wheel has already been invented. NFPA 101®, Life Safety Code®, sets forth criteria for what crowd managers should know and what they should be prepared to do. The code lists the "duties and responsibilities of crowd managers," which include all of the things necessary to move people from danger to safety in an emergency, including safety and security hazards for that particular venue and how to move and evacuate people in an emergency. Those include understanding 10 key components, including crowd manager roles and responsibilities; safety and security hazards that can endanger public assembly; crowd management techniques; methods of evacuation and movement; procedures for reporting emergencies; crowd management emergency response procedures; paths of travel and exits, facility evacuation, and emergency response procedures and, where provided, facility shelter-in-place procedures; venue and guest services training; an introduction to fire safety and fire safety equipment; and other specific event-warranted training.


Elsewhere, the Life Safety Code references the four crowd dynamics factors of time, space, information, and energy, and the many issues to be considered when conducting a life safety evaluation. The code even includes several reasonably foreseeable scenarios requiring crowd management, including "firearms violence." Best of all, unlike the ability to fight through confirmation bias (the tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of one's existing beliefs or theories) or exercise situational awareness (knowing what's going on around you)—both rare gifts—crowd management requires no special skills or life experience. It can be taught to nearly anyone whose job puts them in a position where they could lead others to safety.

Teaching people to lead is particularly important when one recognizes that roughly 90 percent of event attendees will need to be led. This is the training that fills the gap currently left by "Run, Hide, Fight" programs. Given our actual human strengths and frailties, this is the combination with the greatest likelihood of saving lives in a crisis.

STEVEN A. ADELMAN is an NFPA member and attorney in Scottsdale, Arizona, focusing on litigation and risk management involving sports and entertainment venues. He can be reached at sadelman@adelmanlawgroup.com. Top Photograph: Newscom

0 Comments

Sort by **Newest**

 Add a comment... 

 Facebook Comments Plugin

- [Home](#)
- [Contact](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)

© 2016, National Fire Protection Association

