

SANITARY RULES AND REGULATIONS

GOVERNING THEATRES, MOVING PICTURES, DANCE HALLS AND LECTURE HALLS

THE PEOPLE OF PORTO RICO
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

SAN JUAN, P. R., *February 9, 1921.*

Administrative Bulletin No. 212.

BY THE GOVERNOR OF PORTO RICO
A PROCLAMATION

Sanitary Rules and Regulations No. 69.—Theatres, moving pictures, dance halls and lecture halls; Regulation for; Promulgated.

The following rules and regulations, having been approved by the Insular Board of Health on October 28, 1920, and by the Executive Council on February 1, 1921, in accordance with the provisions of Act No. 81, approved March 14, 1912, are hereby promulgated for the information and guidance of all concerned:

REGULATION FOR THEATERS, MOVING PICTURES, DANCE HALLS AND LECTURE HALLS

Article 1.—No building shall be used for moving-pictures shows, theatres, dance halls or lecture halls without due permission from the Department of Health.

Article 2.—Buildings with capacity for more than 500 persons shall be built of fireproof material.

Article 3.—No building of new construction, to be used for moving pictures, theatre, dance hall or lecture hall, shall have ceiling less than fifteen feet high.

Article 4.—The roofs of theatres, moving-pictures halls, dance halls and lecture halls, shall be provided with ventilators or skylights with lateral openings constructed in such a manner as to give easy exit to impure air and to establish good ventilation. The total surface of the unobstructed part of the ventilators and openings of the skylights shall not be less than 5 per cent of the surface of the hall. This 5 per cent of the surface may be taken into account in buildings of ancient construction, in calculating the total area of the openings required by Regulation No. 19.

Article 5.—The direct and permanent ventilation shall be in accord with Regulation No. 19.

Article 6.—The seats in the pit, boxes and gallery, shall be separated not less than two feet six inches from back to back, horizontal measure. The mean width of the seats measured from centre to centre of their arms, shall be not less than twenty inches. If benches are used, their capacity shall be determined at the rate of one seat for each fifteen inches of their length.

Article 7.—The chairs or benches, except those used in the boxes, shall be fixed to the floor.

Article 8.—There shall be not more than six seats between any point and the nearest aisle.

Article 9.—The buildings that face only on one street shall have a lateral outside alley of not less than eight feet in width.

Article 10.—There shall be a distance of not less than seven feet between any seat and the ceiling above it.

Article 11.—The aisles shall have a width of at least one foot and eight inches for every hundred persons who are to make use of them, and an additional foot to facilitate passage. No aisle shall be less than two feet six inches in width.

Article 12.—All aisles shall be unobstructed and no person shall be permitted to place seats, or stand in the aisles during the entertainment.

Article 13.—Smoking shall not be permitted in the halls frequented by the general public in theatres, moving-picture halls, lecture halls and dance halls. Smoking shall only be permitted in places provided for that purpose and previously approved by the Department of Health, or in aisles opening on the street or uncovered courtyard.

Article 14.—Children under five years of age shall not be permitted in moving-picture halls.

Article 15.—A water closet and basin shall be provided for women and another for men, also a urinal for each 500 men or fraction thereof on each floor. The floors and baseboards of the rooms in which the plumbing is installed shall be impermeable, made of some non-absorbent material like asphalt, tiles, glazed clay or non-absorbent monolithic composition. The non-absorbent base-board shall rise not less than six inches above the surface of the floor and the angle formed by floors and the base-board shall be covered by an oval or concave appliance.

Article 16.—In the towns where there are no aqueducts the latrines shall be constructed according to the models of the Department of Health. The latrines for the exclusive use of women shall be in the proportion of one for each five hundred persons or fraction thereof that the building can hold and those for the use of men shall be in the proportion of one for each 400 persons or fraction thereof. The distance between the latrines and the building shall be ten meters or more if possible, but never less than three meters. The space between the building and the latrines shall be uncovered, but a covered passage, without side walls shall be permitted between them and the building.

Article 17.—In theatres, dance halls, moving-pictures halls, etc., with capacity for a thousand or more persons, latrines shall not be permitted, and the necessary apparatus shall be installed for the flooding and cleaning of the water closets, etc., by means of water tanks with capacity of not less than two gallons for each person accommodated in the place.

Article 18.—In moving-picture halls, the box for the projecting apparatus shall not be less than 40 feet from the screen.

Article 19.—The axis of the luminous shaft of projection shall not form with the horizontal an angle of more than 15 degrees.

Article 20.—The box for the projecting apparatus, including its floor shall be constructed of a fireproof material. Emergency exits with automatic fastenings shall be placed on each side of it. If doors are used with common hinges,

these shall be so placed that the doors shall open outward. The dimensions of the box shall be the following:

(a) When only one projector is used the box shall be at least six feet long by six feet wide and seven feet high.

(b) When two projectors are used it shall be at least nine feet long by nine feet wide and seven feet high.

(c) For three projections it shall be at least twelve feet long by twelve feet wide and seven feet high.

Article 21.—The box shall be provided with a large ventilator placed directly over the projectors and in direct contact with the open air. When two or more projectors are used, a ventilator shall be placed over each projector, whenever it be possible. These ventilators shall be made entirely of a fireproof material. Besides these ventilators the boxes shall have other means of direct ventilation with the outside.

Article 22.—Independent of the box but in direct communication with it by means of doors, another fireproof room shall communicate with the aisles or with the outside.

Article 23.—In the doorway connecting the box and fireproof room, easily handled receptacles containing substances designed to combat fire shall be placed. Receptacles shall also be placed in the entrance halls and in other appropriate places.

Article 24.—The entrances to theatres shall have a width of not less than one foot eight inches for each one hundred persons that can be accommodated. Also one foot shall be added to facilitate entrance. If the theatres only have one entrance, this shall not be less than six feet wide.

Article 25.—In the pit, balconies and galleries there shall be an emergency exit three feet four inches in width for each three hundred persons or fraction thereof.

Article 26.—Outside fire-escapes shall be provided three feet four inches in width for each three hundred persons. If stairs six feet in width are used they shall be considered equivalent to two stairs three feet in width each.

Article 27.—The stage in theatres shall be provided with two emergency exits, each three feet in width.

Article 28.—The cellar under the stage shall have, far from the door that connects with the stage, a fire-escape stairway three feet in width that leads directly to the street or to a convenient alley.

Article 29.—All the doors that lead to a fire-escape shall have a notice "fire escape," in distinct letters six inches in height, painted red, or illuminated during the performance by a red light.

Article 30.—The steps of the stairs shall have not less than ten inches of tread and not more than eight inches of rise. The stairs shall be provided with hand-rails not less than two feet six inches high. Spiral stairways and steps of triangular shape shall not be permitted. Fire-escapes from the different floors shall be absolutely independent of each other, all intermediate connection being prohibited.

Article 31.—The stairs shall have uprights of not more than seven and one-half inches and treads of not less than ten and one-half inches. The stairs shall have handrails of not less than two feet and six inches in height. Winding stairways shall not be permitted nor steps in corners. The exits of the stairs belong-

ing to the upper sections shall only have openings in their upper and lower parts and shall not have any intermediate door.

Article 32.—In the towns that have aqueducts, connections shall be installed for hose that may be used in case of fire. There shall be at least two fire hose in the building and they shall be kept in an accessible place.

Article 33.—In towns where there is no aqueduct and no connection is possible, two chemical fire extinguishers shall be kept in two conspicuous and accessible places.

Article 34.—Storage places shall not be permitted under the stairs.

Article 35.—In all theatres and moving-picture halls a regulator shall be installed to diminish the intensity of the electric light.

Article 36.—The exhibition of advertisements shall not be permitted unless they are on a dark background.

Being so promulgated, and having been published in two newspapers of general circulation in the Island in accordance with section 13 of Act No. 81, approved March 14, 1912, the said regulation entitled "Regulation for Theatres, Moving Pictures, Dance Halls and Lecture Halls," approved by the Executive Council on February 1, 1921, on and after this date have the force and effect of Law.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of The People of Porto Rico to be affixed at the city of San Juan, this ninth day of February, A. D. nineteen hundred and twenty-one.

[SEAL]

ARTHUR YAGER,
Governor.

Promulgated according to law, February 9, 1921.

E. J. SALDAÑA,
Acting Executive Secretary.