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House File 382

February 26, 1947.
Passed on File.

By POLICE REGULATIONS.

A BILL FOR .

An Act to provide specifications for places of public assembly where nitrocellulose or combustible films are used and exhibited to provide for inspection and approval of all places of public assembly using and exhibiting nitrocellulose or combustible film within the state of Iowa by the state fire marshal or his deputies and to provide for penalties for violation.

Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

1 Section 1. The word "marshal" as used in this act
2 shall mean the state fire marshal or his deputy.

1 Sec. 2. It shall be the duty of the marshal or his
2 deputies, as soon as is possible after the effective date
3 of this chapter, to enter, inspect and examine, at any
4 reasonable time, all halls, theatres, auditoriums, or other
5 places of public assembly within the state of Iowa where
6 nitrocellulose or inflammable film is used or exhibited,
7 in operation on the effective date of this chapter or
8 thereafter, annually, and to approve or disapprove such
9 halls, theatres, auditoriums or other places of public
10 assembly for further operation. Notice of approval or of
11 disapproval shall be sent to the owner, manager, or person

12 in charge, with copies to the city or town fire chief,
13 mayor or officer in charge in the city, town or place
14 concerned.

1 Sec. 3. With respect to all such halls, theatres, audi-
2 toriums, and other places of public assembly, using
3 nitrocellulose or combustible films, the following shall
4 constitute the minimum requirements for a certificate of
5 approval on inspection by the marshal:

6 1. The building shall be of substantial construction,
7 on good foundations, kept in good repair, be capable of
8 sustaining capacity audiences with a margin of safety to
9 the satisfaction of the marshal, and be equipped with
10 suitable lighting and adequate ventilating facilities.
11 Such places of public assembly shall be separated from the
12 rest of the building by substantial partitions, walls,
13 and floors, shall not have exposed or dangerous wiring or
14 open fuse, terminal or switch boxes, and shall be kept
15 clean and free from accumulations of waste, rubbish, trash,
16 papers and combustible materials of every kind.

17 2. All seats in such places shall be of durable
18 construction, securely fastened to the floor, spaced not
19 less than twenty-eight inches back to back, and kept in
20 good repair. No row of seats shall contain more than
21 fifteen seats between aisles, and where there is but one
22 aisle no row shall contain more than seven seats.

23 3. Aisles shall not be less than thirty-two inches

24 in width. No seats or chairs shall be placed in the aisles,
25 foyers, passageways, corridors, or exitways, and no person
26 shall be allowed to stand therein.

27 4. Entrance and exit openings and emergency exits
28 must be provided at a minimum rate of thirty inches
29 horizontal measurements for each one hundred fifty seats,
30 fitted with doors which will open outward in such a
31 manner as not to become an obstruction in a passageway,
32 corridor or exitway, and no such door shall be fastened
33 so as to be inoperative from within when the building is
34 occupied by an audience. Emergency exits shall be ample
35 in number and conveniently located with respect to size,
36 shape, and construction of the hall, theatre, auditorium
37 or other place of public assembly, shall have clearly
38 marked, lighted signs over the doors, which shall be
39 kept fully lighted when such place is occupied by an
40 audience.

41 5. No nitrocellulose or inflammable film shall be
42 used or projected unless the projectors for the use of
43 such film shall be installed and operated within a projection
44 room or booth of sufficient size to allow thirty inches
45 of clear space on both sides and rear of projectors.

46 6. The projection room or booth must be of fire
47 resistive construction, as approved by the marshal,
48 provided with fire resistive door or doors of adequate
49 size and location, which shall be so arranged as to close

50 automatically. All such booths constructed after the
51 effective date of this act shall be equipped with two fire
52 resistive doors as widely separated as possible.

53 7. Booths shall have adequate openings for all
54 projection machines, and all such openings must be equipped
55 with gravity fire resistive shutters inside of the booth,
56 arranged and interconnected so that all shutters will
57 close automatically upon the operation of some suitable
58 fusible or mechanical releasing device in the event of
59 fire in the booth. All shutters or openings not in use
60 shall be kept closed.

61 8. Ventilation shall be provided by means of a vent
62 pipe having inlets at one or more points in the ceiling,
63 and also connected to each arc lamp housing. The vent
64 pipes shall lead to the outside of the building or to a
65 special noncombustible flue. All vent pipes shall be kept
66 at least one inch from combustible material or be separated
67 therefrom by approved noncombustible heat insulating
68 material not less than one-half inch in thickness. Drafts
69 in each vent pipe shall be maintained by an exhaust fan
70 having a capacity of at least two hundred cubic feet per
71 minute for each eighty square feet of floor area of the
72 booth.

73 9. No films shall be exposed in the booth except those
74 in the process of being transferred to or from the projector
75 or being rewound, inspected or repaired. Each reel of film

76 shall be kept in a separate metal case, or in approved
77 metal cases with separate compartments, made without solder
78 and with tight fitting covers. The booth shall be kept
79 clean and free from combustible material at all times. A
80 metal can made without solder and with a self-closing cover
81 shall be provided as a receptacle for waste film and other
82 material.

83 10. All electrical equipment and wiring shall conform
84 to reasonable standards of safety. There shall be no
85 exposed electric wires and no open fuse, terminal or
86 switch boxes.

87 11. The approach to any such booth shall be by stairs,
88 passageways or corridors; the use of a ladder for such
89 purpose is prohibited.

90 12. Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter,
91 where any building is not equipped with a permanent fire
92 resistant booth, a traveling exhibitor shall use a portable
93 booth constructed of fire resistive materials which
94 completely encloses all projection equipment and which is
95 approved by the marshal.

1 Sec. 4. Whenever the state fire marshal or his deputies
2 shall find upon investigation or examination that any of
3 the provisions of this chapter have been violated or that
4 defects of installation or construction exist, he shall
5 immediately notify the owner, manager, or person in charge,
6 and the city or town officials concerned, in writing,

7 stating the nature of such violation or defect. If such
8 violation or defect is not remedied within a reasonable
9 time after such notice has been given, then the marshal
10 shall communicate the fact of such violation or defect,
11 together with any evidence he may have, to the prosecuting
12 attorney of the county in which the violation has occurred,
13 and it shall thereupon be the duty of such prosecuting
14 attorney to cause the arrest and prosecution of the person
15 or persons violating. Any owner or person in charge of
16 any theatre or place of operation of any equipment under
17 this chapter who shall fail to comply with the provisions
18 of this act or shall hinder or obstruct the carrying out
19 of the provisions and requirements of this chapter shall
20 be punished by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding
21 thirty days or by a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars.

1 Sec. 5. In addition to all other remedies the state
2 fire marshal or his deputies are hereby empowered to cut
3 off all electric current from the premises where a violation
4 of this act has occurred and no person shall restore the
5 supply of electric current until the defects of installation
6 or construction have been corrected to the satisfaction of
7 the marshal.

1 Sec. 6. In municipalities having ordinances, or
2 hereafter adopting ordinances relating to the construction
3 of theatres, halls, auditoriums or other places of public
4 assembly where nitrocellulose or combustible film is used,

5 and to the installation and operation of moving picture
6 machines, and containing additional regulations for the
7 safe and proper installation and operation of such machines,
8 nothing herein shall be construed to abrogate or limit
9 such local ordinances as may exist in any city or town
10 covering the subject matter of this chapter, but the
11 jurisdiction of said local authorities in this matter shall
12 be subject to the jurisdiction of the state fire marshal,
13 as herein provided.

1 Sec. 7. The provisions of this act shall not apply
2 to churches, schools, clubs, or halls where moving picture
3 exhibitions are given only upon occasions and solely for
4 religious, benevolent or scientific demonstrative purposes,
5 except that when nitrocellulose or combustible film is used
6 for such exhibitions, permission of the marshal must first
7 be obtained.

1 Sec. 8. If any provisions of this chapter are declared
2 unconstitutional, or the applicability thereof to any
3 person or circumstance is held invalid, the validity of
4 the remainder of the chapter and the applicability of
5 such provisions to other persons or circumstances shall
6 not be affected thereby, but shall remain in full force
7 and effect.

EXPLANATION OF H. F. 382

This bill has been presented at the request of the State Fire Marshal as a necessary fire prevention and safety measure for the benefit of the general public.