

January 29, 2013

News Release

*For Immediate Release*

### **Nightclub Fire Highlights Importance of Bar Safety**

To help prevent a tragedy like the one in Brazil from happening in Springfield, patrons of Springfield's bars and nightclubs should ask a few questions before heading out for the night. Is the establishment frequently overcrowded? Are the exits easy to see and access? Does it have a sprinkler system? Will there be indoor pyrotechnics?

Springfield fire marshals say asking these questions and following a few safety steps can help keep Springfield's bars and nightclubs safe. Watch for overcrowding while in bars and nightclubs. Patrons should be able to easily move around. Also, familiarize yourself with all the exits. During an emergency, most people go out the same way they went in. This can lead to a trampling effect known as crowd crush. Because of this, knowing alternative exits can greatly increase your chances of getting out safely. And remember, exits should never be blocked. In addition, bar and nightclub owners need to make sure they are not using combustible furnishings and do not allow ANY pyrotechnics without first obtaining a permit. Finally, patrons should report violations such as overcrowding and blocked exits to 911.

Patrons should also make note of if the bar or nightclub has a sprinkler system. While newer bars and nightclubs with occupancy limits over 100 are required to have sprinkler systems, bars and nightclubs built prior to 2000 may not be sprinklered. History will show that fire incidents with mass casualties have all occurred in establishments with no sprinkler system.

In Springfield, fire marshals regularly inspect high-occupancy structures such as bars and nightclubs. Their goal is to enforce fire codes such as exits, occupancy loads and sprinkler system requirements. Additionally, fire marshals occasionally patrol downtown bars and nightclubs during busy nights such as a pub crawls, looking for overcrowding and other safety issues. Use of indoor pyrotechnics is also regulated in the City of Springfield. Anyone interested in using indoor pyrotechnics must first obtain a permit. Fire marshals then inspect the scene prior to and are on scene during the event to ensure safety.

#### **For media only:**

For more information, contact: Fire and Life Safety Educator Cara Restelli Erwin, (417) 864-1699.