

EVENTS THAT SHAPED THE HISTORY OF SAFETY

The 1942 Fire at Coconut Grove

The year 2021 marks the 79th anniversary of one of the most heart-breaking disasters in the history of the United States. On November 28, 1942, the Coconut Grove, one of Boston's popular nightspots, caught fire, killing hundreds.

THE BACKDROP



At 10:15pm, a bus boy approached the Melody lounge lined with faux palm trees to change a light bulb.



Since he could not see in the dark, he lit a match that swiftly ignited the trees, spreading to the rest of the décor.



The fabric from the ceiling caught fire, raining down shards of fabric on the patrons.



Panic ensued as the fire spread and burst through the front entry, leaving just one exit visibly usable.



The exit, which was a revolving door, got jammed as patrons stampeded their way out.



People fell and piled up until the door broke, and a fireball caused by sudden oxygen burst, burned them all alive.

THE CONSEQUENCES



492
people died



The bus boy was **exonerated**



The incident provoked several **fire safety laws** to become a national requirement



10 people were indicted, but Barney Welansky, the bar owner, was convicted of 19 counts of manslaughter.

300 people could have been saved that day if the doors were outward swinging. Does this highlight the criticality of fire safety laws?

FIRE PREVENTION The lessons we can learn



Installation of large window openings equipped with louvers secured by a fusible link to open automatically when subjected to heat, for drawing flames or gases in places of assembly.



Installation of automatic sprinklers in restaurants, nightclubs, bars, and other places of entertainment.



Prohibition of basement rooms for assembly unless there is a provision for two direct street access with metal-covered automatic closing doors installed in passages between basement and first floor.



Absolute prohibition of suspended cloth false ceiling in any place of assembly.



Defined aisle space between restaurant tables that are to be firmly affixed to the floor to prevent obstruction during egress.



Panic locks in exit doors to be marked by illuminated "EXIT" sign with minimum candlepower as specified in the law, and supplied by an electrical system.



Avetta celebrates safety and the progress that has been made to continually improve the safety culture of any workplace. We strive to inculcate a culture of safety and sustainability across enterprises and want to ensure that every worker returns home safe.