

What was the “Cabaret Law?”

[In 2017, the Cabaret Law was amended to repeal the requirement for a license.](#)

Enacted in 1926, the New York City Cabaret Law regulated patron dancing at commercial establishments. Dancing would be allowed once an establishment could show that it was in compliance with all pertinent City codes, including zoning, building, health, safety, and fire. The license was issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs, now known as Department of Consumer and Worker Protection, **who no longer require or issue the Cabaret license.**

What are the current regulations for dancing at nightlife venues?

Though the requirement to obtain a cabaret license for all venues to allow patron dancing has been eliminated, there are still regulations that govern dancing, including the following **(More detail on reverse):**

- Zoning (NYC Dept. of City Planning)
- Fire code (NYC Fire Department)
- Building code (NYC Dept. of Buildings)
- Community Board (Community Affairs Unit)
- Method of Operation (NY State Liquor Authority)
- Certificate of Occupancy (NYC Dept. of Buildings)

In addition, if the venue has a license from the [State Liquor Authority](#) and did not originally apply for patron dancing, the venue will need to file a [Change Method of Operation Application](#) with the SLA to make patron dancing an approved part of their liquor license.

How does the repeal affect the operation of nightlife venues?

While the requirement to obtain a Cabaret license has been repealed, **the underlying requirements that allow for patron dancing were not eliminated.** Only the last item in the process, the cabaret license itself, was eliminated. If the nightlife venue was not permitted to have dancing before the cabaret license was repealed, it is likely that it is still not allowed.

How can the Office of Nightlife help?

The Office of Nightlife is a liaison for New York City's nightlife community to all City agencies. Additional information on how to apply, maintain, and comply with regulations that govern nightlife in New York City are also available on the Business page of our website at nyc.gov/nightlife

If you have any questions regarding nightlife regulations, please feel free to connect with us at our various channels listed below.



Zoning (NYC Department of City Planning)

[Zoning and Land Use Map](#)

[Zoning Resolution Index of Uses](#)

The Department of City Planning sets the framework of the city's land uses. Land uses generally fall within three categories: Residential (R), Commercial (C), and Manufacturing (M). **Dancing is allowed in C-2, C-3, C-4, C-6, C-7, and C-8 as well as all M Districts.** Use the Zoning Map linked above to identify the venue's underlying zoning and check with the Index of Uses to confirm what is allowed in its district.

Fire code (New York City Fire Department)

[Request an FDNY Inspection](#)

[FDNY Certificate of Fitness](#)

The Fire Department maintains the [Fire Code](#) that outlines **requirements for Public Gatherings and regulates decoration, standing areas, egress, fire guards, safety announcements, inspections, evacuation protocol and fire apparatus access.** Where a **Place of Assembly Certificate of Operation (PA)** or **Temporary Place of Assembly (TPA)** permit is required, a Certificate of Fitness may be required as part of a venue's fire safety and emergency plan.

Building and Administrative code (NYC Department of Buildings)

[Request a DOB Inspection](#)

The [NYC Building Code](#) and the [NYC Administrative Code](#) regulate the design and construction of Places of Assembly, spaces where large groups of people gather for any activity. Together, they outline the **requirements for occupant load limits, exits and exit components, fire protection systems, and accessibility.** Where 75 or more people are anticipated indoors or on the roof, Places of Assembly must have a sign indicating maximum capacity and a Place of Assembly Certificate of Operation posted in a highly visible location within the space.

Certificate of Occupancy (NYC Department of Buildings)

[Certificate of Occupancy page](#)

The Department of Buildings issues building permits and licenses, including the Certificate of Occupancy. **A Certificate of Occupancy (CO) states a building's legal use and type of permitted occupancy.** The Department of Buildings offers a lookup where anyone can identify the venue's CO and confirm if dancing is permitted by its license.

Community Board (Community Affairs Unit)

[Community Board Lookup](#)

Community Boards are appointed advisory groups of the community districts in New York City. They advise on land use and zoning within their district. Use the Community Board Lookup to identify in which Community District the venue is located.

Method of Operation (NY State Liquor Authority)

[Search for venue's Method of Operation on the SLA Public License Query](#)

[Method of Operation Application](#)

The New York State Liquor Authority issues licenses and permits for venues that serve liquor and require that venues comply with the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Law. The ABC Law requires that a statement that indicates the type of establishment operated at the premises be submitted to receive a license. The venue's **Method of Operation must include 'patron dancing'.**

SLA Cabaret Liquor License vs. DCA/DCWP Cabaret license

The Cabaret Liquor License from the New York State Liquor Authority is a license that is required for businesses with musical entertainment for more than 600 people to serve alcohol. **This license and other City and State regulations still apply for establishments even after the repeal of the Cabaret Law.**

The Cabaret license from the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs (now known as the NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection) **is no longer required and is no longer issued.**