



(Trade mark of IDEEA)

## Tampa's Fire trap on lay-a-way, The IKEA Store?



**Al Mccray**

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**I don't visit the IKEA Store anymore. I am afraid I might be burnt up in a store fire.**

The next time you visit the IKEA Store in Tampa for some more of those great and tasty meat balls, you might want to first; make out a will and pay-up your life insurance premium. 'Cause chances are, if there is a store fire you will not survive. 'Cause you could not find your way out of that mouse designed puzzle maze fire trap filled with smoke.

The exit doors, if you spot one, appear like scenes from a haunted ghost house movie. They are mysterious, hard to find and misleading with an array of signs. Many of the signs lead to a wall.

The last time I was there, during normal hours, even without the store being filled with smoke, it took me fifteen minutes to find a way out. I kept going around in circles. My concern is about a safe evacuation in case of a fire.

I think that the puzzle floor traffic plan was designed to make sure all customers pass by all of the store's many products per floor. Should their first products on display be a row of caskets and urns with beneficiary forms? Or should it even be night vision goggles to be dropped off on your way out, if you make it out?

However if you really just got to have another dish of those great tasting meat balls and want to take a chance that you could survive a store fire, there are ways to find your way out.

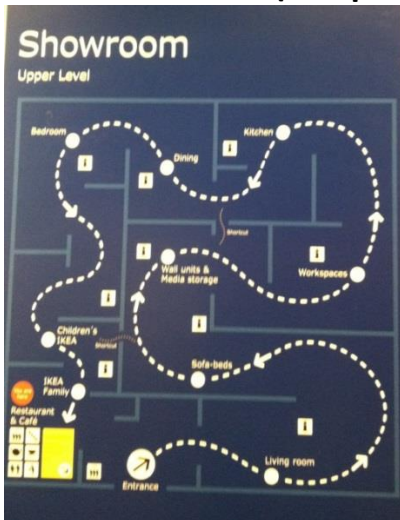
When you enter the store, tie long rope or bungee around your waist and to the exit door. Just follow the rope back to entrance if there is a fire. Or drop on the floor small flashing lights as you move through the puzzle maze fire trap.

After my last visit to IKEA months ago, I tried to make contact with the store management about my concerns. It took six calls and three personal visits to the office get anyone to call me back. The management office had a parking lot entrance way where I did not have to actually go inside the puzzle store. At least the office staff could escape quickly. Finally Katy Gardner, 813.623.4042, the local media person, referred me to corporate public relations, Mr. Joseph Roth, 610.834.0180.

When I spoke with Mr. Roth, he basically dissed my concerns and said the building, at its construction, passed and got all the appropriate building permits. He said that he did not think that safety at the store was an issue. I thought to myself, The RMS Lusitania at construction, passed the hull inspection and all other inspections.

After several minutes of dissing me, I did get Mr. Roth to agree to a safety tour of the store with me and the local management. That was weeks and weeks ago and no one has since called me. I called Mr. Roth back two week ago about the safety tour. I left on his voice mail my name and why I was calling him back. Mr. Joseph Roth is yet to call me back.

**(The puzzled maze fire trap layout of IKEA)**



**(Could you find your way out in case of a fire at this fire trap?)**

In the interim, I visited the Tampa's Fire Chief Office. I was directed to contact the City Fire Marshall. I contacted Fire Marshall. He was very interested in what I had to say. He told me that he would have a supervisor to visit the store. I requested that I would be notified when, so I could be there at the same time. I am still waiting on the call.

I visited Tampa City Hall and spoke to the council person for that district. He told me that he had never been to the store, nor have he heard any complaints about a fire safety issue. He assured me that by this weekend, 11.09.13, he would or he would instruct one of his aides to visit the store and call me back.

I have spoken to several ex-shoppers of IKEA that have expressed similar concerns as mine.

With all the seniors and disabled people visiting the IKEA store, you would think that public safety would be priority number one. Perhaps there should be lights embedded in the floor that would generate a blinking trail out of the store. Like follow the red blinking lights?

Hopefully IKEA never has a fire to cause death or injury to anyone while shopping or enjoying those great meatballs. But the management of IKEA seems to have a, "We don't give a dam and dismissive attitude", about my safety concerns.

The authorities need take a special safety check at the IKEA Store in Tampa, Florida. I certainly miss those great balls.

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