

MANAGING ALCOHOL IN YOUR CLUB



Drinking behind the bar

Your club shouldn't allow bar servers to drink alcohol while on duty, for the health and safety of themselves, patrons of the bar and club members.

Reasons employees or volunteers should stay sober behind the bar include:

- to comply with the liquor act relevant to your state or territory
- to uphold health and safety
- to responsibly serve alcohol
- to uphold club image
- to avoid voiding club insurance.

Drinking behind the bar sets a poor example for younger club members, reduces the capacity to manage the business and the ability to judge the intoxication of others (which bar servers are legally obliged to do).

Instead of allowing bar servers to drink while on duty:

- Offer staff and volunteers a free meal or free non-alcoholic beverages while they are on duty
- If staff are volunteering their time, consider offering a small gift (e.g. movie tickets, food voucher, petrol voucher)
- Create a policy for staff members that stipulates no alcoholic beverages while on duty
- Reiterate behaviour expectations at staff meetings and place signs about the policy change for staff members and patrons to see
- Implement an award each month (e.g. a small prize or voucher) for bar staff members who are meeting the requirements.

Drinking games

Drinking games have been found to contribute to excessive (binge) drinking.¹ Excessive drinking can lead to:

- risk taking behaviour
- injury
- road accidents
- physical assaults
- disease.²

Excessive drinking also impacts work productivity and places a large burden on law enforcement and emergency services.²

Instead of drinking games, encourage different activities for club members:

- Organise games that do not involve alcohol such as 'minute to win it' challenges
- Organise activities on popular nights, such as trivia or bingo
- Provide board games or other games (e.g. Jenga, Connect 4) so people have other activities to engage with.

Unlimited/free drinks

Free drinks have been found to encourage excessive (binge) drinking.³ Providing free drinks or unlimited drinks (regardless of the event) to patrons is viewed as an irresponsible serving practice, as staff are unable to monitor the consumption of alcohol (which is an RSA requirement).

Role modelling safe drinking practices is important as it sets a good example for younger club members. When alcohol consumption is monitored, your club is a safe and inclusive space for everyone to enjoy.

Instead of providing free drinks to club members:

- Provide free non-alcoholic drinks
- Ensure lower alcoholic content beverages are sold at a cheaper price point
- Provide other incentives for people to attend events (e.g. a raffle or lucky draw prizes – consider using sponsor vouchers).

Drinking in areas outside of the bar

In each state or territory there are laws that regulate the consumption of alcohol in public places and licenced venues. There are strict penalties if these laws are broken.

Ensure you have signs which clearly state where alcohol can and cannot be consumed, this will allow staff and patrons to easily understand your licence or permit requirements. Your state/territory liquor authority will be able to direct you to the appropriate signage for your club.

Ensure you communicate your licence or permit requirements to bar staff/volunteers, so they are aware and can enforce the appropriate policies.

Give club members updates in newsletters on licence or permit requirements so they understand behaviour expectations while consuming alcohol on the premises.

Consuming alcohol on a bus:

Depending on the laws in your state or territory, it may be illegal for people to drink alcohol on board, unless the bus has a commercial liquor licence or a BYO permit. Buses which have a liquor licence or permit are required to either follow strict codes of conduct, or meet the requirements under their relevant liquor act, to ensure the safety of patrons.

Consequences of members drinking on a bus can include excessive drinking, injury and distracting the driver.



Consuming alcohol in the change rooms:

If your club has a liquor licence or permit, the consumption of alcohol must be within the stipulated area outlined in your licence. Supplying or consuming alcohol in areas that are not permitted, such as the change rooms, could be a breach of your liquor licence or permit.

Consuming alcohol in the change rooms is also a danger for health and safety as it is an environment where drinking is not monitored, and injury can easily occur.



How can we help you?

No matter what level you're at, feel free to contact Good Sports at any time using the online contact form: goodsports.com.au/contact-us

References:

1. Grossbard J, Geisner IM, Neighbors C, Kilmer JR, Larimer ME. Are drinking games sports? College athlete participation in drinking games and alcohol-related problems*. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*. 2007(1):97.
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; 2019.
3. Kingsland M, Wolfenden L, Rowland BC, Gillham KE, Kennedy VJ, Ramsden RL, et al. Alcohol consumption and sport: a cross-sectional study of alcohol management practices associated with at-risk alcohol consumption at community football clubs. *BMC Public Health*. 2013;13:762.