



## ALCOHOL SALES & COMMUNITY EVENTS

### WHY ALCOHOL RESTRICTIONS AT COMMUNITY EVENTS ARE IMPORTANT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

- **Alcohol at community events provides easy access to alcohol for underage youth who could have friends over age 21 who purchase alcohol for them.** Restrictions or bans on alcohol at community events reduces social access to alcohol.
- **At sporting events, alcohol use can fuel outbreaks of fighting and other forms of disruptive behavior among fans.** Stadiums can implement policies that discontinue alcohol sales during the second half of a sporting event, or prohibit the sale of alcohol in the stands to reduce alcohol-related problems at these events.
- **Alcohol at community events increases the risk of alcohol-impaired patrons driving after an event.** Banning the sale of alcohol at an event, or restricting the hours during which alcoholic beverages can be sold might reduce the likelihood that patrons will drive drunk after the event.

#### Considerations for Establishing This Policy in Your Community

**ISSUE:** Stadium owners and other event organizers may oppose bans or restrictions on the sale of alcohol for fear that such restrictions could reduce participation in events or reduce profits because revenue from alcohol sales would be eliminated.

**RESPONSE:** Although some events may draw smaller crowds as a result of an alcohol ban, many events would not lose a significant number of participants. Instead, such events would likely draw more families who want to enjoy an event that is safe and free from alcohol-related problems.

**ISSUE:** Some community members might believe that the restrictions will be more effective if they are implemented voluntarily and have the support of the event organizers.

**RESPONSE:** Community members can approach event organizers first. If event organizers do not voluntarily implement alcohol restrictions, concerned community members can present the organizers with a strong argument which could encourage them to impose their own alcohol restrictions at their event. If event organizers cannot be persuaded to implement their own restrictions, community members might want to take the following steps:

- Gather information about any problems associated with specific events (contact: police department, licensing agency, managers of facilities, security personnel, event coordinators, business and property owners near the event).
- Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and enforcement of existing alcohol control policies for community events.
- Identify alcohol control policies that address the problems associated with community events, and attempt to pass local ordinances requiring such policies.

**Note:** Community members are strongly urged to consult with a local attorney to learn about state law requirements before attempting to pass a local ordinance on restricting alcohol at community events.



### **Considerations for Implementation**

- **Event organizers should ensure that all staff, paid and voluntary, are aware of event policies and are trained to comply with these policies.**
- **Mechanisms need to be in place to enforce event policies.** As with any policy, alcohol restrictions at community events must be enforced in order to be effective. A monitoring system, such as security guards, management spot-checks, or surveillance cameras, can ensure that employees are complying with event rules.

### **How Alcohol Restrictions at Community Events Fit into a Larger Context**

Youth obtain alcohol from commercial and social sources. With effective alcohol restrictions at community events, both commercial and social access to alcohol can be reduced. It will be more difficult for teens to purchase alcohol themselves and for them to obtain it from others. Additionally, alcohol restrictions send a clear message that alcohol at youth-oriented events is not acceptable. Communities also need to implement and enforce policies that reduce commercial and social access to alcohol outside of community events.

Efforts by event organizers to restrict alcohol use at community events can serve to educate the community about the need for alcohol control policies and build community support for other prevention efforts such as:

- sponsorship restrictions
- zoning ordinances
- billboard bans and advertising restrictions
- restrictions in public places

Sources: Cassady, D., Flora, J., Foote, D. Alcohol Use at Community Events: Creating Policies to Prevent Problems. San Diego Alcohol Program and Applied Communication Technology, 1987. University of Minnesota, Alcohol Epidemiology Program, website, February 2001.



## ALCOHOL RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

### • Risk Assessment.

- **Conduct an on-site audit of potential alcohol-related trouble spots. Sample questions include:**
  - Do your ticket sellers sell tickets to already intoxicated individuals?
  - Are servers of alcohol checking ID for everyone under the age of 30?
  - Can alcohol be brought to your event (or parking lot)?
  - Are intoxicated patrons staggering out of your facility? Is security intervening?
  - Where is the alcohol sold? Is the area separate from the event? Fenced off.
  - Is there accessibility for emergency personnel if needed?

### • Written Policies and Procedures:

- **Your event should have written policies and procedures regarding the sale of alcohol. Sample policies include:**
  - serving cup sizes (maximum of 14-16 ounces)
  - number of drinks allowed per purchase (1 or 2 is recommended)
  - pricing of the alcohol (it should be more expensive than non-alcohol beverages)
  - have non-alcoholic beverages available and promoted
  - establishing an “alcohol area,” fencing in the area
  - checking ID of everyone who enters into the “alcohol area”
  - hours of sale
  - not permitting anyone under 21 in the “alcohol area”
  - to serve alcohol you must be 21
  - train all event volunteers in Responsible Alcohol Service

### • Training:

- In the past, training only servers was considered sufficient for alcohol risk management. Today, however, managers, servers, and all event personnel must be trained as well, in addition to developing alcohol policies and procedures which outline the responsibilities of the servers.

### • Public Awareness/Community Relations:

- A comprehensive alcohol management program can create an appropriate environment leading into community events and provide a fall-back bargaining position. Being proactive is even better. Promote responsible alcohol service training. Erect signage and take out ads in the local media prior to the event announcing your alcohol policies and procedures.

Source: FACE Truth and Clarity on Alcohol.



## SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR ALCOHOL SALES AT COMMUNITY EVENTS

**NOTE:** Follow the instructions in the opinion section of your local newspaper for submitting a letter to the editor. Most newspapers print these instructions in the opinion-editorial section, or you can call the newspaper for instructions.

### **ISSUE: Alcohol Sales at Community Events**

Every year, I look forward to our community festivals here in [NAME OF YOUR COMMUNITY]. These events highlight the best that we have to offer in our community. However, I'd like to express my concerns about alcohol sales and the risks of underage drinking at these upcoming events.

It's clear that many aspects of these events are planned very carefully. I would like to encourage all of the sponsoring organizations to give equal thought and effort to preventing underage drinking at these events. Why? Because underage drinking is associated with car crashes, vandalism, assaults, date rape, and many other tragedies. Organizations who sponsor our community events can be held liable for any tragedies that occur as a result of underage drinking at these events.

Let's work together to keep alcohol out of the hands of kids at our community festivals. Event sponsors and organizers can institute a plan to ensure the safe sale of alcohol by implementing the following action Steps:

- Locate alcohol sales areas away from all family and children-oriented activities.
- Sell a variety of non-alcoholic beverages as well.
- Limit the hours of alcohol sales.
- Require a photo ID.
- Limit purchases to one cup per person.
- Ensure that the maximum cup size is no more than 12-14 oz.
- Train all server staff in Responsible Alcohol Service.
- Make sure that servers don't drink alcohol.
- Establish a responsible alcohol management plan for the event.
- Inform the community about your responsible alcohol management plan through the newspaper, radio and television interviews leading into the event.
- Place visible signage announcing your alcohol policies at the event.

The actions described above will greatly reduce the risk of underage drinking at this year's events. I hope others will join me as we work together to make this year's summer festivals both fun and safe for all of us.  
Sincerely,

Include your name and group name, if applicable



## SAMPLE LETTER TO SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS ALCOHOL SALES AT COMMUNITY EVENTS

Date

Include your name, group name and address

To sponsoring organization of community event Dear [NAME OF ORGANIZATION]:

As our community looks forward to the [NAME OF EVENT], I'd like to express our organizations thoughts and concerns about the possibility of underage drinking and the impact it could have on all of us. I hope you will do everything possible to prevent any underage youth from purchasing or drinking alcohol at this event, especially since you could be held liable for any alcohol-related tragedies that could occur as a result.

Here is a basic alcohol management plan that we hope you will institute at this year's event:

- Locate alcohol sales areas away from all family and children-oriented activities.
- Sell a variety of non-alcoholic beverages as well.
- Limit the hours of alcohol sales.
- Require a photo ID.
- Limit purchases to one cup per person.
- Ensure that the maximum cup size is no more than 12-14 oz.
- Train all server staff in Responsible Alcohol Service.
- Make sure that servers don't drink alcohol.
- Establish a responsible alcohol management plan for the event.
- Inform the community about your responsible alcohol management plan through the newspaper, radio and television interviews leading into the event.
- Place visible signage announcing your alcohol policies at the event.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions about how best to prevent underage drinking at [NAME OF THE EVENT]. I appreciate your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Include your name and group name here

Source: FACE Truth and Clarity on Alcohol.



## WHAT OTHER COMMUNITIES HAVE DONE

Community members and local retailers in Mill Valley, California, raised concerns before the city council about the use of the city's downtown plaza for numerous events at which alcohol was available or was a focal point of the event. Community members voiced concerns about public intoxication at these events, driving under the influence, and the number of youth present in the plaza during these events.

The following policy revisions were adopted:

- Parks and Recreation Commission must approve: alcohol use at community events, length and hours of alcohol sales at events, and security and monitoring of alcohol service.
- Sponsors of community events that primarily focus on alcohol must also offer low-alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks and free food.
- Wine and beer, but not distilled spirits, are permissible at community events.
- Warning signs that discourage drinking and driving must be displayed.

The Mill Valley coalition felt they achieved success because they had developed the support of concerned community members. The Mill Valley coalition has made the following recommendations for other community groups attempting to pass alcohol-control ordinances:

- Through personal contact, identify which community members are with you or against you.
- Be willing to compromise, rather than taking an "all or nothing" stance.
- Determine the community position on alcohol control by talking with key community members.

For additional information on the Mill Valley ordinance, please contact:

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Vallejo Alcohol Policy Coalition  
PO Box 94591  
Vallejo, CA 94591

Sources: Cassady, D., Flora, J., Foote, D. Alcohol Use at Community Events: Creating Policies to Prevent Problems. San Diego Alcohol Program and Applied Communication Technology, 1987. University of Minnesota, Alcohol Epidemiology Program, website, February 2001.