



Alcohol Service Safety Checklist

This checklist is intended as a starting point for developing or strengthening your venue's alcohol management practices. It does not replace compliance with local, state, or federal laws. Always review your policies and procedures with local authorities, licensing agencies, and legal counsel to ensure your operations meet all applicable requirements.

Planning and Policy

- ☐ Have a written alcohol service policy that outlines hours of service, ID requirements, service limits, and cut-off times.
- ☐ Ensure the policy is reviewed and approved by venue leadership and communicated to all staff and vendors.
- ☐ Verify that local alcohol service regulations (permits, licensing, catering, special event permits) are current and valid.
- ☐ Post or maintain easily accessible contact information for local law enforcement or regulatory agencies.
- ☐ Integrate alcohol service into the overall Emergency Operations Plan or Event Safety Plan.

Staffing and Training

- ☐ Train all servers, bartenders, and event staff in responsible beverage service (such as TIPS, ServSafe Alcohol, or an equivalent program).
- ☐ Provide staff training on recognizing and responding to signs of intoxication or unsafe behavior.
- ☐ Brief non-service staff, including ushers, volunteers, and security, on alcohol-related policies and escalation procedures.
- ☐ Conduct a pre-event briefing to review service expectations, cut-off times, and communication protocols.
- ☐ Ensure the staffing plan provides adequate supervision of service areas during peak times.
- ☐ Require staff to check valid, government-issued photo ID for all guests.
- ☐ Establish procedures for handling fake or altered IDs according to venue policy, such as discreet refusal or notifying security.
- ☐ Set service limits, such as two-drink maximums, no double shots, and no service after a set time.
- ☐ Serve alcohol only in designated areas and during approved times.
- ☐ Make non-alcoholic options and water readily available at all times.



Communication and Coordination

- ☐ Establish clear communication channels between bartenders, security, and management.
- ☐ Designate a point person to respond to alcohol-related incidents or guest concerns.
- ☐ Ensure security and medical teams are aware of alcohol service areas and the event schedule.
- ☐ Test radios or other communication tools before service begins.
- ☐ Use an incident reporting process to document any alcohol-related concerns or responses.

Guest Awareness and Environment

- ☐ Post signage that outlines service policies, such as ID requirements, service limits, and responsible drinking reminders.
- ☐ Include responsible drinking messages in pre-event communications or event programs when appropriate.
- ☐ Provide and promote food options during alcohol service.
- ☐ Display rideshare, taxi, or public transit information where guests can easily find it.
- ☐ Maintain adequate lighting and supervision in all service and consumption areas.

Incident Response and Post-Event Review

- ☐ Train staff to safely and respectfully refuse service or remove a guest when needed.
- ☐ Establish clear procedures for summoning security or medical assistance quickly.
- ☐ Complete and review incident reports after each event.
- ☐ Include alcohol service discussions in post-event debriefs to identify lessons learned and areas for improvement.
- ☐ Update policies or training as needed based on feedback and observations.

Final Check

Before every event that includes alcohol service:

- ☐ Confirm permits and staff certifications are valid.
- ☐ Hold a short briefing with service, security, and medical staff.
- ☐ Verify signage, communication tools, and supplies are in place.
- ☐ Identify who has final authority to end alcohol service or close the bar.