

# SPECIAL EVENT PLANNER'S GUIDEBOOK

## BEFORE THE EVENT

**Plan the event so that drinking alcoholic beverages** is not the sole or primary activity. Knowing your guests and understanding that people behave differently is important in planning an event. The time of the day, day of the week, location, entertainment and facility can all influence the behavior of the guest.

**It can be difficult to predict who will attend the event**, but knowing who came to similar events can provide insight about who will come and how they will behave. A weekend rock concert during spring break attracts a different crowd than a Monday night symphony performance in the park.

**The invitation or announcement can set the tone for the event** and can help control the type and size of the crowd. In addition to information about date, time, location and other details, event promotional materials should inform attendees about the availability of food, alternative beverages, entertainment and transportation.

## CHECKLIST

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Consult experienced event planner about details.  | For larger crowds, consult a professional security service to provide expert security. | Provide for adequate staffing to properly serve and supervise event, including expert bartender and servers. |
| Establish tasks and timelines   | Establish a clear chain of command that staff and attendees will recognize.            | Verify that all event staff serving alcohol is age 21 or older.  |
| Price food and non-alcohol beverages to encourage purchase.                                 | Advertise in the invitation accessibility for people with disabilities.                | Announce "a reception for friends" instead of "wine tasting" or "cocktail party".                            |
| Announce availability of food in the invitation.  | Announce availability of alternative beverages.  | Specify in the invitation hours of beverages service & entertainment.  |
| Assure proper equipment is available for securing, storing and serving of alcohol and food. | Make arrangement to have designated drivers or alternative transportation available.   | Educate servers about transportation options for guests.   |

## PLAN THE EVENT SETTING

### **Make sure the setting is comfortable and properly planned.**

Arrange seating, entertainment and food in a manner that encourages groups to form. Place the beverage (bars, wine stations) in a convenient location, but do not make it the center of activity. Place food and beverages near each other and throughout the area.

### **If there will be dancing, make sure the area is clearly marked.**

All areas should have ample space for movement, be well-lighted and easily monitored. When underage people will be present, avoid creating areas that may be used for illegal drinking.

## CHECKLIST

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Arrange for an event location that is adequate to accommodate expected number of guests. | Clearly mark all parking areas and entrances/exits and provide event personnel to staff each site. | Make the entrance obvious and inviting and have responsible                                 |
| Ask a hosting group to provide introductions and promote social interaction.             | Assure that guests can easily identify staff.  | Make certain tables or booths are clearly visible and inviting.                             |
| Promote both food and alternative beverages.   | Promote the concept of responsible hospitality by posting signs.                                   | When appropriate, set up special tables or booths for age identification.                   |
| Station trained and responsible staff at age identification tables.                      | Provide those checking I.D. with the proper tools for their work.                                  | Provide age identification policies stating that individuals shall have their I.D. checked. |
| Plan to make alternative activities available.   | Offer education if there is wine or beer tasting.  | Arrange for comfortable seating to encourage small group formation and socializing.         |

## PLAN THE FOOD

### **Have food ready and available when guests arrive.**

Food tables or booths should centrally located, attractively arranged and easily accessible. Locate food throughout the event setting and/or offer trays of food to seated guests if appropriate. Position food near the beverages and maintain food service for the duration of the event. If a dessert will be served, take alcohol beverages off tables before service begins.

**Provide high-protein, higher-fat and non-salty food** for your guests. Salty foods increase thirst; high protein and high fat foods slow the absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream. If foods are awkward or sloppy to handle, guests will be less likely to choose them. Offer foods that are simple to prepare and eat.

## CHECKLIST

|  |   |                        |
|--|---|------------------------|
| Prepare and store food properly.                   | Make food available throughout the event  | Price food affordably. |
| Instruct hosts to direct guests to the food areas. | Provide eating utensils, plates, napkins and garbage and recycling receptacles. |                        |

## PLAN THE BEVERAGES

**Offer a variety of beverages, including a large selection** of low-alcohol and non-alcohol choices. The many exceptional alcohol-free beers and wines on the market should be included when adults are expected. In addition, soda, fruit juices, flavored bottle waters and alcohol-free specialty drinks can be attractively served. Water and other alternative beverages should be offered at wine or beer tastings, and dump buckets should be provided.

**When underage persons are expected, establish a system** for age identification and activate a plan for dealing with problem minors. Use different or distinctive glassware for alcohol-free beverages. It is important to recognize that some people do not believe underage people should be served alcohol-free beer or wine.

**It is also important to establish procedures for measuring** servings. A standard serving of alcohol is 1.5 ounces of 80 proof distilled spirits, 4.5 ounces of wine and 12 ounces of beer. It is a good policy to serve only one standard drink at a time and avoid serving doubles, pitchers or multiple drinks.

For wine or beer tasting, use glasses with a marked pour line.

## CHECK LIST

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Allow only designated servers to pour alcohol beverages. Do not allow self service.  | Do not allow alcohol servers to drink alcohol beverages during the event  | Servers are trained in Responsible Beverage Service.   |
| Alcohol beverage areas are secure, and those entering and leaving are closely monitored.   | Signs required by law are properly posted and visible to guests.  | Alcohol beverages are served only to those who have had their age properly verified and have the event stamp or bracelet.  |
| Make clear the designated limit on the number of alcohol beverages a person can purchase or be served at one time.   | Servers monitor whether one person is passing a second drink to another person, and make certain that the other individual is neither underage nor intoxicated. | All beverages are to be carefully measured and served as single servings. A single serving is a 12 ounce beer, a 4.5 ounce glass of wine or a 1.5 ounce measure of 80 proof distilled spirits. |
| Post service policies in a highly visible location.<br>Suggested signage Includes:<br>“Anyone under the age of 30 must have their I.D. checked before being served.” | Post service policies in a highly visible location.<br>Suggested signage Includes:<br>“Only two drinks will be served to a person at a time”                    | Post service policies in a highly visible location.<br>Suggested signage Includes:<br>“We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone who appears to be intoxicated”                         |

## SAMPLE VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

**To protect the health and safety of our guests** and to avoid any conflicts or difficulties, especially regarding the service of beer and wine, we have developed the following policies and guidelines.

**It is important to work cooperatively with other staff** members and management to help reduce the incidence of drinking/driving crashes, intoxication and underage drinking. There are several important procedures you must follow to accomplish this. Please review these guidelines, initial before each item and sign the pledge affirming your commitment to follow these procedures to the best of your ability.

### **Please initial to the left of each item**

\_\_\_\_ I agree to arrive on time and report to my supervisor to receive any last-minute instructions and to meet with other event staff. If I am provided with an event cap, name badge or other distinguishing staff apparel, I will wear them at all times.

\_\_\_\_ I will report a few minutes early to my station/booth to become acquainted with the location of materials and supplies and to meet other volunteers. If I am replacing another volunteer, I will check to see if there are any problems or individuals to whom I should refuse alcohol service.

\_\_\_\_ It is my responsibility not to serve alcohol to anyone under the age of 21, or to allow anyone under the age of 21 to consume alcohol. I can be found criminally liable and the event organizers can receive a fine or lose their license. I will follow these procedures to protect myself and the event from legal liability.

\_\_\_\_ I will not serve alcohol beverages to anyone appearing under the age of 30 unless their identification has been checked and their hand stamped with the official event stamp. The stamp must appear on the back of the right hand. If the guest's hand is not stamped, I will guide him/her to the closest age identification station.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that I am responsible for checking identification, I will receive a package of materials from my supervisor to assist me with the proper age identification procedures. I will review these carefully.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that anyone under the age of 21 is not permitted to serve beer or wine.

\_\_\_\_ If I observe anyone appearing under the age of 21 being provided with an alcohol beverage, I will notify security.

\_\_\_\_ There are no cash sales. Each pour will be made only with the exchange of an event ticket. I will never pour a free glass of beer or wine.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that only official glassware will be used. Wine will be poured only wine glasses and beer in beer glasses. If there is a sellout of event glasses, a special plastic glass will be authorized and each booth advised. My supervisor will inform me when to begin pouring into the plastic backup cups.

\_\_\_\_ I will adhere to the pour limit. This will be shown to me and will also be diagrammed at the ticket purchase booth. Overpouring results in loss of sales and increased risk to the safety of those attending the event.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that only two pours per person per visit are allowed in order to control service to underage and intoxicated persons.

\_\_\_\_ I will observe guests for signs of intoxication. I am legally responsible for refusing alcohol service to a visibly intoxicated person. I will learn the signs of intoxication and notify security if I have any concern about a person, either in the crowd or requesting service. Special arrangements have been made for safe alternative transportation for anyone appearing intoxicated.

\_\_\_\_ I will encourage food consumption. We make a special effort to have a variety of food available. Food sales enhance our fund-raising efforts and help prevent intoxication of those consuming alcohol.

\_\_\_\_ Many people choose to abstain from alcohol. We provide a selection of quality adult alternatives and I am committed to making everyone feel welcome.

\_\_\_\_ Guests may not pour their own alcohol. Only qualified event volunteers and staff are permitted to serve alcohol. I will not leave my booth or post unattended.

***SAMPLE VOLUNTEER PLEDGE***

*I have read the above guidelines and agree to comply with the best of my ability. I agree to notify my booth manager, area supervisor or security personnel if I have any difficulty or I am concerned about the safety and well-being of anyone attending this event.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Volunteer Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Supervisor Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*