

# Risk Management Strategies for Serving Alcohol at Events

It's an unfortunate fact — hosting an event comes with inherent risks. Serving alcohol compounds these risks.

*This guide is designed to help manage the risk of serving alcohol at your event by recommending policies/practices which will protect attendees and your organization.*

By implementing these recommendations, you can help improve the safety of your event and your community.

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# Alcohol Risk-Management Checklist

## Planning

- Ban personal alcohol beverages.**
- Set policy** for handling people who have had enough to drink.
- Make an enforcement plan.**
- Limit or eliminate alcohol sponsorship** to avoid the impression that alcohol is central to your event.

## Set-Up and Physical Design

- Set up an enclosed, monitored area** for alcohol consumption.
- Locate family activities** so they are integrated into the main event.
- Post signs** about liquor laws (including underage drinking and overconsumption) and liquor liability.

## Alcohol providers and sellers

- Establish procedures for checking IDs.**
- Identify legal drinkers** with a non-transferable wristband.
- Require servers be of legal age** and have **Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) training**.\*
- Have a clear chain of command.**
- Require liability insurance** that lists your organization or event as *additionally insured*, or you could be held liable.

\*visit [www.maine.gov/dps/liqr/contact.html](http://www.maine.gov/dps/liqr/contact.html) for description and listing of RBS trainings

## Food/Beverage

- Limit size** of alcoholic beverages 12 oz. of beer, 4-5 oz. of wine, or 1 oz. of hard liquor.
- Limit servings** to 1-2 per person at a time
- Make alcohol identifiable** with easily distinguishable cups.
- Stop serving** alcohol at least one hour before closing.
- Provide food** to help slow the absorption of alcohol.
- Offer alternatives**—non-alcoholic drinks and free water.

## Security

- Get help** from professional security, promoters, or event planners. Find out what their alcohol risk management plan is.
- Staff well**, with properly trained security people at all entrances to the adults-only concessions area.

# Know the Law!

**Serving alcohol can cost you and your organization money.**

If alcohol is a part of your event, these laws apply.

## **Maine's Liquor Liability Act**

The law holds that persons/organizations who serve alcohol to a minor or an intoxicated person can be held liable, in a civil action, for damages resulting from that person's consumption of liquor. **Damages may be assessed for property damage, bodily injury, or death. The limit is \$350,000 plus limitless lifetime medical expenses of victims.**

## **Providing Alcohol to Minors or Providing Place for Minors to Consume**

It is a criminal offense to furnish liquor or imitation liquor to a minor or to allow a minor in any place under that person's control to possess or consume liquor. Penalties could include **fines of \$500-\$2,000 and/or a jail sentence of 6-12 months.** If injury or death occurs due to the actions of guests, the person responsible for furnishing the alcohol may be charged with a felony.

## **Maine Statute 28-A and State Liquor Rules and Regulations**

- Set up an enclosed area** (e.g., beer garden) for alcohol consumption where underage people aren't allowed. Areas of consumption are regulated by Liquor Licensing.
- Prohibit drinking in public areas**, and post signage.
- Check identification** for anyone who appears to be under age 27.
- Prohibit drinking by servers.**
- Check compliance with alcohol industry sponsorship requirements.** Have sponsorship plan and materials reviewed by ME Liquor Licensing (<http://www.maine.gov/dps/liqr/> or (207) 624-7220).
- Prohibit drinking games or contests** which award drinks as prizes. Avoid drink specials or other practices encouraging overconsumption.
- No freebies.** Liquor licensees are not allowed to provide free alcohol at a public event unless it is part of a meal package.

**Thank you** for reviewing this guide,  
and for working hard to make our community safe!



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### **Looking for more information?**

The University of Minnesota publishes a  
**Guide for Event Planners:**  
[www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/  
policyatevents.shtm](http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/policyatevents.shtm)

More information on **Maine Liquor Laws**  
and **Maine's Liquor Liability Act**  
can be found at:  
<http://www.maine.gov/dps/liqr/laws.html>  
[http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/  
statutes/28-A/title28-Ach100.pdf](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/28-A/title28-Ach100.pdf)

For more suggestions on  
managing risk at your event, visit  
**[www.21 Reasons.org/non-profits.php](http://www.21reasons.org/non-profits.php)**  
or contact us directly.

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