

Keep Friendship Alive

A Guide to Planning Events and Parties, Large & Small

Hospitality is all the things we do to make our guests feel welcome, comfortable and cared for. Whether you are planning a wedding reception for fifty or a wine-tasting for two thousand, you'll want to make sure that all your guests have a wonderful time **and** get home safely. If you plan to serve or sell alcoholic beverages at your event, the information in this booklet can help insure the success of your event and the enjoyment of every guest.



**BEFORE THE EVENT,
PLAN TO ...**

Serve food

As a host, you should know that food slows the rate at which alcohol affects the body. Like a sponge, it can trap alcohol in the stomach delaying its entrance into the bloodstream. You can help your guests avoid intoxication by serving plenty of good food from the beginning to the end of your event.

- High-protein foods like meats and cheeses, and starchy foods like pastas and breads are the best choices because they stay in the stomach longer than other foods.
- Try to avoid salty snacks which can make your guests thirsty – they may drink more alcohol than they should to quench that thirst.
- Make food attractive and easy to reach. Food tables should be centrally located and near beverages. If the event will be crowded, provide snacks to nibble on and place them throughout the room. Plan to offer trays of food to seated guests.
- If foods are awkward or messy to handle, people probably won't choose them. Finger foods are easiest for guests to pick up, and they are easy for you to prepare and serve.

Provide alternative beverages

As people become more concerned about health and safety – and drinking patterns change – it is important to consider the needs and preferences of guests who choose not to drink alcoholic beverages or who want to switch to an alternative beverage at some point during the event.

- Be sure to promote non-alcoholic beverages as prominently as you promote alcoholic ones. Make them easy to choose by serving them at the same locations where you serve alcoholic beverages.
- Offer a choice of mineral waters, fruit juices, non-alcoholic punches and sodas. In warm weather or when guests are active, you'll need more of these than usual.
- For an adult crowd, provide a selection of non-alcoholic beers or wines. For festive occasions, a punch made with non-alcoholic champagne or a selection of alcohol-free “mocktails” can be a great addition.
- Be aware that non-alcoholic beverages which look like alcoholic ones can create confusion if your guest list includes lots of teenagers and young adults. You can avoid this confusion by not serving these “look-alike” beverages to young guests.

Promote social activity

As a host you should make sure that drinking is not the focus of activity at your event. It's your job to create a setting where guests feel relaxed and welcome. Many people may drink too much if they feel ill-at-ease or isolated. Your party will be a success if your guests are comfortable and involved.

- When you promote your event, focus on its social aspects. An invitation or flyer might read “reception for members and friends” rather than “cocktails” or “wine-tasting.” If you plan to have a large number of minors at your event, you may want to note that I.D.s will be required. In this way you can shape your guests' expectations before they arrive.
- Set up the party room to promote interaction among guests. Arrange tables and chairs in a manner that encourages conversation. If possible, have someone greet each guest on arrival.
- Plan activities to encourage socializing – like music, dancing or games. If your guests stay active with some form of entertainment, they will probably have a better time and will be less likely to drink too much.

- If you plan entertainment or social activities, be sure to have them continue until the end of the event.

Arrange for safe transportation

Responsible hospitality means making sure all your guests get home safely. Gather information on transportation options in your area and make arrangements for safe rides before the event. Plan alternative transportation for anyone who may need it.

- Designate a specific person, to be present for the entire event, to arrange transportation for any guest who needs it.
- Encourage guests to become designated drivers.
- Obtain information on taxis, limousines or other alternative transportation and make it available to all servers, event staff, and guests.

Staff your event with responsible servers

As a host, you are responsible for your guests' safety. Whether you hire a professional bartender or caterer or use volunteers, you should have a plan for monitoring who is served and how much. You should also have clear policies on how to handle minors or intoxicated guests.

- If possible, hire a licensed caterer or professional bartender to supervise alcoholic beverage service.
- Make sure that all alcohol servers, whether volunteers or professionals, understand their responsibility to refuse service to minors and intoxicated guests.
- All alcoholic beverages should be served by designated servers only. Punch bowls and kegs should be "manned" by staff or trained volunteers.
- Servers themselves should not consume alcohol before or while on duty at the event.
- Ask servers to notify you immediately if service is refused to anyone. If your event is large, you will want to brief other servers on the situation and ask them to refuse service to the intoxicated or underage guest.



DURING THE EVENT

Careful planning is important, but don't stop there. A successful event takes work from beginning to end.

Serve alcoholic beverages wisely

Under normal circumstances our bodies can process about one drink an hour. Although you want your guests to enjoy themselves, you don't want them to overdo it. These simple tips can help you avoid over-serving guests.

- Serve drinks only on request. Many guests accept drinks they don't want just to avoid appearing rude.

- Measure and serve standard-sized drinks in glassware that is appropriately sized. Remember that 12 ounces of beer, 4 – 5 ounces of wine, a wine cooler, and 1-1/4 ounces of spirits (standard drink sizes) each contain the same amount of alcohol. You can help your guests pace their own drinking by serving standard-sized drinks.

“A Drink is a Drink is a Drink”

| | | | | |
|--------|---|-----------|---|-------------------|
| beer | = | wine | = | distilled spirits |
| 12 oz. | | 4 – 5 oz. | | 1-1/4 oz. |

- If you plan to serve an alcoholic punch, try a fruit juice base rather than a carbonated one. Bubbly mixers and sodas speed up the effects of alcohol on the body. Alcoholic punches should be labeled so your guests know what's in them.

- Observe your guests. Keep an eye on those who appear to be drinking quickly or show signs of intoxication. Servers should offer food and alternative beverages to these guests instead of serving them more alcohol.

- Never serve alcohol to minors. It is **illegal** to do so, even at a private party with permission from parents.



NEAR THE END OF THE EVENT

Tough drinking-and-driving laws are now in place in California. Still, thousands of people are injured and killed each year in alcohol-related car crashes. You can help prevent a tragedy by making sure that no impaired guest gets behind the wheel.

- Stop serving alcohol **at least one hour before** the end of the event.
- Provide non-alcoholic drinks and more food at this time. Coffee and cake can't make an intoxicated guest sober, only time can do that. But they can encourage guests to stay longer and burn off some of the alcohol they have consumed before they get behind the wheel.
- Schedule entertainment and other activities during the last hour of your event to keep guests involved and active. Give them a good reason to stay at the event for at least an hour **after** alcohol service has been stopped.
- Observe your guests at departure time. Don't let guests drive if they have had too much to drink. Arrange alternative transportation for anyone whom you feel is unsafe to drive.



DO YOU NEED A PERMIT FROM THE A.B.C. FOR YOUR EVENT?

The California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control requires that you obtain a "one-day license" if you plan to sell alcoholic beverages to the public at your event.

If you sell beer, wine or spirits outright, if you charge admission to your event and the admission includes alcohol service, or if you accept donations at your event and furnish alcohol to guests, this constitutes a "sale" under the law and you will need a permit. If there is no sale of alcoholic beverages **and** the general public does not have access to your event, you will not need a permit from the A.B.C.

One-day licenses must be obtained well in advance of your event. In some situations, they may be “conditioned” with requirements for security or other safety measures. If you are unsure about the law or need information on licensing, contact the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control regional office at: (707) 576-2165.



Learn about California’s drinking-and-driving laws, and alcoholic beverage laws. By understanding the legal limits, you’ll be better able to keep your guests safe and out of trouble.

Drinking-and-driving laws (Driving Under the Influence – DUI)

It is **illegal** for an adult to drive under the influence of alcohol or with a blood alcohol level of .08 percent or higher.

The law authorizes law-enforcement officers to take the drivers licenses of persons arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol whose blood alcohol concentration level is .08 percent or higher, or if they refuse a chemical test.

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) may suspend the person’s privilege to operate a motor vehicle for four months for the first violation, or one year for subsequent violations.

Alcoholic Beverage Control Laws

It is **illegal** to give, serve, or sell alcoholic beverages to any person under age 21. This law applies to parents and other family members of minors.

Identification as evidence of age must be issued by a government agency (state or federal). Documents altered in any way are unacceptable.

It is **illegal** to serve or sell alcoholic beverages to an obviously intoxicated person.

It is **illegal** to be intoxicated in public.

One-day licensed alcohol servers/sellers must be 21 years of age or older.

Beverage servers/sellers have the right to refuse service/sale to anyone who appears to be intoxicated or under age 21.



EVENT & PARTY PLANNING CHECKLIST

Planning is the key to a successful event. Use the checklist below to check off each item when completed.

Administrative

- Permits and licenses
- Facility use agreement
- Insurance
- Legally required signs

Staffing

- Staffing plan (food and beverage servers, security)
- Policy training for alcohol servers
- Intervention plan for minors and intoxicated guests
- Designated on-site event supervisor for duration of the event

Food

- Food served throughout the event
- Food accessible to guests

Beverages

- Alternative beverages available and promoted
- Standard glassware and serving sizes
- System for age identification
- Plan for monitoring consumption of alcoholic beverages
- Alcoholic beverage service stopped **one hour** prior to end of event

Setting/Entertainment

- Invitations/promotion
- Entertainment/social activity
- Entertainment/social activities continue until end of event

Transportation

- Alternative transportation options
- Staff designated to identify intoxicated guests and arrange transportation
- Designated driver program

Other

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