



## Responsible alcohol service

### Responsible alcohol service at work events

Many workplaces hold social functions to celebrate organisational achievements, reward workers, and build team cohesion. Some workplaces might also treat clients to lunch or dinner, or workers might have informal gatherings at the local pub or knock-off drinks at the worksite at the end of their working week or shift.

### Why develop guidelines for the responsible service of alcohol?

Regardless of how your workplace celebrates and builds relationships, it is important to have Responsible Alcohol Service Guidelines as part of your organisation's strategy to reduce alcohol- and drug-related workplace risk (see [Online Learning Topic 8: Workplace Alcohol and Drug Policies](#)).

Your guidelines should:

1. recognise that while most workers drink responsibly, some risk is created when workplaces provide alcohol at work events and/or organise activities at licensed venues
2. increase workers' understanding of acceptable work-related socialising and help them recognise and reduce risks associated with alcohol supply
3. set clear standards for behaviour and consumption of alcohol at work-related functions.

Sample guidelines are provided below.

### Alcohol Management and Use at Work-Related Functions: Sample Guidelines

#### 1. Workplace Commitments

*[Workplace name]* is committed to:

1. the responsible service and use of alcohol at all work-related functions and activities
2. maintaining worker and public safety
3. organising inclusive events that are comfortable for non-drinking workers and their families.

These guidelines apply to all work-related functions and activities where alcohol is served and are subject to *[Workplace name]*'s Alcohol and Drug Policy.



## Alcohol Management and Use at Work-Related Functions: Sample Guidelines cont.

### 2. Responsibilities of Function Organisers

Function organisers must:

1. complete the risk assessment template and submit it to the work health and safety manager or *(insert name of responsible person)* for approval at least four weeks prior to the event date
2. indicate the event date, location, and period of alcohol service
3. nominate a responsible person to act as a primary contact at the event and advise attendees who to contact in an emergency
4. liaise with the work health and safety manager about risk reduction strategies
5. ensure an adequate supply of food (e.g., non-salty snacks) and non-alcoholic beverages
6. communicate organisational expectations about responsible alcohol consumption at work events to all attendees, including staff members, caterers, and venue operators.

### 3. Work-related alcohol use Code of Conduct

1. Drinking alcohol is a personal choice. Workers will not be pressured to drink alcohol. Nor will they be made to feel uneasy or embarrassed if they choose not to drink alcohol.
2. If you consume alcohol, drink responsibly and use public transport.
3. All alcoholic drinks will be single unit serves (i.e., no doubles) and spirits will be mixed with non-alcoholic mixers (i.e., no shots).
4. Workers or invited guests who appear intoxicated or impaired will not be served alcohol and may be asked to leave the event.
5. Workers or invited guests aged under 18 will not be served alcohol.
6. You agree to follow the reasonable directions of the nominated responsible person, work health and safety manager, and/or venue operators during the event period.
7. Open bars will not be approved under any circumstances.
8. Workers may be given a limited number of drink cards to facilitate responsible drinking.
9. Be responsible for your and others' behaviour. If co-workers are intoxicated and/or acting aggressively, contact the nominated responsible person, your work health and safety manager, or venue operator.
10. Professional, responsible behaviour and good judgement is expected whenever you are representing *[Workplace name]* at public venues, and functions and events sponsored by us and others.



## Risk Assessment template

The template below provides guidance on how to complete an alcohol-related risk assessment as part of your workplace function/event planning process.

The risk assessment will help you and the authorising officer:

1. assess whether your event presents a low, medium, or high risk
2. identify strategies to manage and reduce risk
3. meet your statutory and common law duties.

**High risk events should not receive organisational approval !**

### Basic principles of safe alcohol events include:

- cheap or free non-alcoholic drinks
- low alcohol drinks
- an adequate supply of food
- event supervision (e.g., a responsible person)
- information about/or organisation of safe transport options
- limited access to high alcohol beverages
- limited alcohol supply
- informing workers about behavioural expectations during workplace functions and events.

Adapt the Event Risk Assessment template below to suit your organisational needs.

## Example of an Event Risk Assessment (4 sections)

### Section 1 – Event Details

Purpose of event:

Event date:

Start time:.....am/pm

Finish time:.....am/pm

Event location:



Section 2 – Risk Criteria: Determine your event’s risk rating.

CRITERIA	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK
Event venue <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> At work-site licensed	<input type="checkbox"/> Off work-site licensed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (e.g., private home)
Alcohol availability	<input type="checkbox"/> Good range of non-alcoholic drinks, light beer only	<input type="checkbox"/> Some non-alcoholic drinks, full strength beer, light beer & wine	<input type="checkbox"/> Few or no non-alcoholic drinks, full strength & light beer, wine, & spirits
Food availability	<input type="checkbox"/> Full meal served near start of event	<input type="checkbox"/> Food (finger food etc) available ½ hour before alcohol made available	<input type="checkbox"/> No food or only salty snacks (chips/nuts)
Supervision	<input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated supervision	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time supervision	<input type="checkbox"/> No supervision
Event duration	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 hours
Bar Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> RSA* trained staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Combination of RSA trained staff & untrained staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Self serve, untrained staff only, or BYO
Bar Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash (licensed)	<input type="checkbox"/> Combination (cash/open bar/BYO)	<input type="checkbox"/> Open bar/BYO
Activity type	<input type="checkbox"/> Family-orientated	<input type="checkbox"/> Low key (eg., end of week get together)	<input type="checkbox"/> Party (e.g., end of year Xmas party)
Venue accessibility <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> Everyone must drive, no public transport	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority must drive, taxis and public transport available	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority can walk, get taxis or use public transport
Event mobility	<input type="checkbox"/> Event starts and finishes in one location	<input type="checkbox"/> Event starts in one place and moves to another	<input type="checkbox"/> Pub crawl type event, three or more locations
Attendee age & gender mix <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> Enter reasons for selection	<input type="checkbox"/> Enter reasons for selection	<input type="checkbox"/> Enter reasons for selection
No. of attendees	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-100	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 100
Overall risk assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> High

\*RSA: Responsible Service of Alcohol

Count the number of ticks in each column. The category that scores the highest number of ticks is the risk assessment for your event.

Low-risk events must have more ticks than medium- and high-risk ticks combined. Address medium- and high-risk criteria in Section 3, Risk Control Strategies.



1. Venues which are clean, licensed, well lit, seated, provide food and entertainment options, and have qualified service staff and management are lower risk than unsupervised and/or unlicensed environments. See Doherty, S.J., & Roche, A.M. (2003). *Alcohol and Licenced Premises: Best Practice in Policing*. National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA), Flinders University.
2. Accessible transport options lower the risk of drink driving; however, they might also increase the likelihood of risky drinking. People who are intoxicated might also be at greater risk of violence or experiencing an accident if they are walking home. Identify potential risks and responses in Section 3 Risk Control Strategies.
3. In general, workers who are young and/or male are more likely to drink at short-term risk. However, recently risky drinking behaviours have also increased amongst middle-aged workers. People also may drink more when they are in large same sex groups. An equal mix of older/younger and male/female workers may lower risk. Identify potential risks and responses in Section 3 Risk Control Strategies.

### Section 3 – Risk Control Strategies

Detail how you will manage and reduce identified risks.

### Section 4 – Supervision and Approval

Event Organiser Coordinator

Name:	Signature:	Date:
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Nominated Responsible Person

Name:	Signature:	Date:
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WHS Manager Approval

Name	Signature:	Date:
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Resources and handouts are available at <https://worklife.flinders.edu.au/external-site-resources>.

References are available at <https://worklife.flinders.edu.au/references>.