

## ALCOHOL SERVICE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Host Liquor Liability may be one of the largest risks that a golf course and the management team faces in today's environment. While lifestyles have changed and people are generally more responsible about drinking and driving, the reality is that the laws have also become more strict and the allowable limits continue to be reduced across the country.

While people's intentions are always good, there are times when you will need to act before a situation gets out of control. Here are some things to think about as you review the Alcohol Service Policy at your facility:

### **1) Policy Objective**

It is against the law for a club or any licensed establishment to serve Members or Guests to the point of intoxication. If your club is found guilty of serving any person to the point of intoxication the club may share in the liability for damages and injury caused by intoxication.

The golf club's goal must always be to protect the Members and Guests while ensuring that they have a pleasurable experience while at the club. However, there are limits and to this end, the staff and management must refuse to serve anyone to the point of intoxication. This should include the refusal to serve alcohol, beer or wine to anyone who appears to be intoxicated to the point of creating a potential inconvenience or danger to him/herself or to others.

Proper formal guidelines and policies must be put in place by every golf club that serves alcohol and the policy should be updated and reviewed with the entire staff on a regular basis to ensure that all employees know how to react when difficult situations arise.

### **2) Policy Guidelines**

Here is a list of guidelines that you may wish to incorporate into your club's Alcohol Service Policy:

- a) All alcohol service staff must be provincially certified i.e. Smart Serve, Serving It Right, etc.
- b) Only Members and Guests of legal drinking age are to be served alcohol.

- c) Proper photo identification (I.D.) must be produced and confirmed whenever a server is in doubt.
- d) If a server is concerned about someone's age then the issue must be elevated immediately to their supervisor and the bar manager.
- e) Service of alcohol is to be denied to **all** Members and Guests who have consumed alcohol to the point of becoming intoxicated and therefore a potential danger to him/herself and others.
- f) Servers are responsible for monitoring the consumption of the patrons they are serving.
- g) When in doubt servers should seek a second opinion from their direct supervisor or the bar manager.
- h) Tact and discretion is recommended at all times.
- i) When refusing to serve due to age, a supervisor should be present.
- j) Refusal due to "over-drinking" must be reported to a Supervisor and the Bar Manager who will speak to the member or guest in question.
- k) Once a decision has been made there should not be further discussion or bargaining. All decisions are final and to do otherwise will only increase the liability of the club should something go wrong.
- l) All other service areas must immediately be informed of your decision and service must be refused at all areas of the club.
- m) A formal Bar Incident Report should be completed at the time of all refusals.

### **3) Bar Incident Reporting**

The goal of all Incident Reports is to capture the details of the event while they are still fresh in the minds of those involved. These reports will go a long way in protecting the club and will serve as a written record of events if needed in the future. All reporting must be taken extremely seriously and copies should be kept for many years since you never know when they could be required in the future.

A Bar Incident Report is no different and should be considered your first defence in the event that a claim should ever arise. The following guidelines may assist you in the development of your own report template for use at your club.

At the time of the incident, as a bare minimum, you should record:

- 1) Members Name and Account Number
- 2) Names of Guests and Others Present

- 3) Date and Time of the Incident
- 4) Servers Name
- 5) Supervisors Name
- 6) Bar Managers Name
- 7) Describe the Situation and all Events Leading up to the Report
- 8) Include the Type and Amount of Alcohol Consumed
- 9) Include the Members Reaction to the Denial
- 10) Record the method the Member used to Leave the Club
- 11) If a Taxi was called include the Company Name, Number and Time

#### **4) Conclusion**

It is imperative that all golf clubs understand their requirements under the Laws in their province. The provincial rules should be considered a minimum standard. Recent legal rulings have made it very clear that it is the responsibility of the “host” to ensure that their patron’s get home safely.

The first step towards protecting your Club is to get familiar with your Provincial Liquor License Act and the Server Certification Program available to your staff. Certification of all staff and managers must be a requirement with no exceptions.

A well thought out Alcohol Service Policy must be created, approved by management and ownership and then reviewed with all staff on a regular basis. This Policy should be reviewed and approved by the board of directors and signed off on an annual basis.

By establishing and adhering to an Alcohol Service Policy at your club you and your staff will be more effective in protecting members and guests while avoiding potential tragedy as a result of intoxication.

#### Disclosure Statement

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