

Western Australia Department of Sport & Recreation

DEVELOPING AN ALCOHOL POLICY

Implementing an alcohol policy in your sporting club will take time. Planning and some necessary strategies need to be undertaken before producing a written policy. There are five main steps involved in developing a practical alcohol policy.

1. Gain commitment and support

It is important to actively involve people in each stage of the process. This encourages commitment from club management to incorporate the policy into the club's business plan.

- Talk to club members about the issues.
- Identify alcohol-related incidents that have occurred in the past.
- Place the alcohol policy on the agenda for your next committee meeting.
- Form a working party that includes players, parents, committee members and community members.
- Identify barriers, such as resistance to change, that the club may face when introducing an alcohol policy. Build appropriate strategies into the policy to counter these barriers, such as providing training for bar staff.

2. Analyse the current situation

Talk with club members and supporters to find out more about current levels of alcohol use, patterns of consumption, and members' attitudes and expectations with respect to the provision of alcohol.

- Discuss the liquor licensing guidelines with local police.
- Ask local health promotion agencies to assist.
- Use this checklist to start your analysis:
 - How is alcohol served in the club?
 - Are we obeying the legal requirements of our liquor licence?
 - Is the licence displayed prominently in the club? (the requirements are listed on the licence)
 - What is our revenue from alcohol sales?
 - How can we diversify our income?
 - What food do we provide? When is it available? How is it promoted?
 - What non-alcoholic drinks are available? How are they promoted?
 - How is alcohol promoted? Does the club encourage heavy drinking? Does it sell drinks cheaply? Does it hold drinking competitions? Is alcohol given as a prize?
 - What is done to ensure that alcohol is not served to minors? Are minors asked for proof of age? Are serving guidelines displayed around the bar?
 - How does the club handle intoxicated people?
 - Do servers know when someone is intoxicated? Do they know how to stop serving alcohol to them?

2. Draft the policy.

The policy should cover such issues as:

- training bar staff

- dealing with minors and intoxicated people
- the sale and promotion of alcohol
- food and its promotion
- low-alcohol and alcohol-free drink alternatives
- safe transport options
- When drafting your alcohol policy, make sure you consider the following:
- What are the club's expectations of the policy?
- Who will be responsible for policing the policy?
- What penalties will be enforced if the policy is ignored?
- How will the policy be evaluated?
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3. Promote the policy

Once the committee endorses the policy, make sure that the local community and, particularly, everyone involved with the club is aware of it and understands it. Promoting the policy plays a vital part in making it work. Try to time the changes to commence at the start of the season, rather than halfway through it.

- Inform club members of the policy via newsletters, meetings, notice boards and event programs.
- Include information on club membership forms.
- Display the policy prominently where alcohol is sold.
- Arrange for club representatives to talk to local schools to spread the message that your club is serious about taking care of its members where alcohol is concerned.
- Write a press release about the program for local newspapers.
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4. Review and improve the policy

A yearly review of the policy will ensure that it continues to be applied and improved. Club committees change regularly, so it is important to document the process to enable future committees to continue to implement the policy.