

MODEL TAVERN POLICIES:  
A GUIDE FOR ON-SALE LICENSEES

INTRODUCTION

Every tavern can benefit from having written policies. Written policies can reduce your risk of problems. Your employees will be better able to manage various situations (for example, "Excuse me, our tavern policy requires us to see identification.") When employees know their responsibilities, they are less likely to make a mistake like selling alcohol beverages to an underage person.

When you have no written policies, each employee may have his or her own idea about what the rules are, what they mean, and when they should be applied. This pamphlet will assist you in developing your own tavern policies. You may want to use our "Model Tavern Policies", or adapt them to fit your needs. Written policies are an important part of being a responsible licensee. In the long term, the responsible tavern will build a strong and loyal customer base.

Here are some suggestions on writing and administering your policies:

- It is always a good idea to obtain ideas from your managers and employees when writing new policies. The employees will be more supportive of policies they helped to create.
- Make sure policies are clear and specific.
- Provide all employees with a copy of the policies.
- To ensure that employees understand their responsibilities, have them sign an Employee Responsibility Statement. Keep this in each employee's personnel file.
- Reinforce policies by providing regular training to employees.
- Between trainings, hold regular staff meetings where you discuss the rules, recent problem situations and ways to prevent those situations from happening again.
- Advise employees that you will spot check their compliance with the policies and provide them with a regular performance review.
- Reward employees who show special proficiency as responsible alcohol beverage sellers. Provide incentives to those employees who participate in various anti-drug activities.

Remember, written policies, good communication and a supportive environment will go a long way toward the success of your business.

TO: All Employees  
FROM: Management  
SUBJECT: Tavern Policies

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It is **everyone's** responsibility to make sure that customers who buy alcohol beverages are at least 21 years of age.

We will request proof of age (I.D.) from any customer who appears 30 years of age or younger. To help employees do their job, managers will post the following sign near the cash register:

**"NOTICE: Our employees have been instructed to request I.D. from any customer who appears to be under 30 years of age. Thank you for your cooperation."**

We have the right to, and will, refuse service to any customer who cannot produce adequate I.D.

We will be familiar with the appearance of a genuine Wisconsin driver's license and identification card.

We may accept the following documents (both issued by the DMV) as I.D.:

- Wisconsin driver's license
- Wisconsin I.D. card

We may also accept the following documents as I.D., **but only if we are familiar with them:**

- Federal military I.D. card
- U.S. passport
- Foreign passport with photo
- U.S. government immigrant I.D. card
- Other state-issued driver's license or I.D. card

We will use a pre-printed age chart as a quick way to determine age. The age chart, which says, **"To Buy Alcohol, You Must Have Been Born on or Before (date),"** will be updated daily.

We will require anyone who has shown documentary proof of legal drinking age to sign the "I.D. Register" if the person's age is in question.

Management will provide extra training for employees who need practice in checking I.D.'s.

When selling pitchers, we will request an I.D. for each person receiving a glass.

We will use separate types of glassware to distinguish alcohol drinks from non-alcohol drinks.

We will encourage an atmosphere that promotes social interaction among people of all ages, and provides activities other than drinking.

Advertising materials and campaigns will not use alcohol beverages as the primary basis for attracting customers to the establishment.

We will not use promotions that encourage intoxication. There will be no drinking contests or drinking competitions. We will not advertise, "Buy one drink, get one free", "Two for the price of one", or "All you can drink for ..."

We will not offer free alcohol beverages or sell them below cost.

We will not lower alcohol beverage prices for the purpose of promoting sales.

There will be no "Happy Hour" where prices of drinks are reduced for a specified time period because this encourages excessive drinking. Cocktail hour attractions will be accomplished through the use of food or entertainment. For example, we will have a "Hungry Hour" at which appetizers will be made available for free, or for a low "admission" price. This brings in customers and holds down intoxication.

We will not promote drink specials to certain groups of individuals (for example, "Ladies' Night").

When we promote a special cocktail, wine or beer, we will offer a comparable non-alcohol beverage. If we promote or list alcoholic drinks on a menu or display, we will promote a non-alcohol drink also.

Food and other non-alcohol beverage items will be promoted through table tents.

If we offer complimentary appetizers or snacks, we will make them available to any customer, whether they purchase an alcohol beverage or not.

We will **discourage intoxication**, and **not serve any person who looks or act intoxicated**, even if they are taking a taxicab or have a "designated driver". This includes employees and regular customers.

When a customer has been "cut off" in someone's station, the employee will tell other employees.

**Management will support servers' decisions to terminate service to any customer.**

Responsible service techniques can reduce a server's tips. Therefore, management guarantees the tip to any server who terminate service to an obviously intoxicated customer.

Drinking alcohol beverages during your shift, after your shift or at closing time is not allowed. Drinking on the job impairs your ability to perform your duties. You are more likely to make mistakes in judgment such as serving underage or obviously intoxicated customers. Drinking on the job can cause other employees to assume some of your responsibilities, without receiving any compensation for the extra work. This can create a negative staff morale. In addition, it is more difficult for you to tell a customer they are "cut off" when you have been drinking along with them.

Use or possession of illegal drugs on the way to work, on the job, or in our establishment is **not permitted** and **will** result in termination.

We will not assume a customer wants an alcohol beverage. Instead of saying, "May I bring you a cocktail?" say, "May I bring you a beverage?"

We will promote "alternative beverages". An alternative beverage is any beverage which can be substituted for an alcohol beverage for the purpose of pacing drinking, slowing intoxication, preparing to drive, or offering a beverage choice besides an alcohol beverage. Coffee, juices, mineral water, flavored waters, seltzers, non-alcohol or low-alcohol beers, wines and mixed drinks are all alternative beverages.

We will provide and promote "Mocktail" non-alcohol drinks that are similar to popular cocktails.

We will know who is getting each drink. We will not bring a drink for anyone who is not present.

We will count drinks.

We will use measured shots rather than freepouring to ensure against overpouring. (Shots will be one ounce, rather than 1½ or 2 ounces.)

We will sell no more than one drink to a customer at one time.

We will not sell pitchers to individual customers.

We will not bring a second drink before the customer has finished the first one.

We will discourage the buying of rounds.

We will not push drinks.

We will slow down service if the customer is ordering or drinking rapidly. We will do this by visiting the table less frequently, and avoiding the table until all customers have finished their drinks.

At closing time, we will announce that it is closing time and that drinks will be picked up in \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. We will not announce "last call" because this encourages customers to gulp drinks before driving. We do not believe in "one for the road."

If a customer is too impaired to drive safely, we will persuade the person not to drive, and arrange for a safe ride. If the customer refuses, employees should advise management, who will notify the local law enforcement agency of a description and the license plate number of the vehicle.

A list of taxi companies and phone numbers will be posted at each bar, hostess station and pay telephone.

We will use the "Designated Driver" program. This program encourages customers to arrange for their transportation before they begin drinking. Here is how it works: The server asks groups of three or more who the designated driver will be. The designated driver may receive complimentary non-alcohol beverages and/or food such as appetizers or a dessert. If the server sees the designated driver consuming an alcohol beverage, he or she must pay for all drinks and food they have consumed.

We will provide extra training for employees who need practice in serving alcohol beverages.

We will promote food during the late afternoon and late evening hours with snacks. Appetizers will be available in the bar until closing time. We will emphasize high protein fatty foods such as meats and cheese, which slow alcohol absorption. We will avoid offering salty, crunchy items because they cause customers to drink more.

Overcrowding will not be permitted for several reasons. First, it makes use less able to properly monitor customers' behavior, resulting in sales to underage and intoxicated customers, destruction of property, fights and injury. Second, customers may not be able to evacuate in case of a fire or other emergency. Finally, too many customers means more mistakes, poorer service and smaller tips.

We will limit our customers to a number no higher than the legal capacity set by the Fire Department.

We will maintain an adequate ratio of staff to customers. This will help us monitor beverage sales and customer behavior. Advise management when more staff is needed to monitor customers.

During busy periods, door personnel will monitor the number of people entering and leaving the establishment.

We will keep customers from crowding around the bar.

Security staff will make sure customers are able to move freely in hallways, aisles and common areas.

We will maintain our establishment for sociability by providing table seating for groups of different sizes, games and other non-drinking activities. To encourage socialization, we will keep the lighting from becoming too dim and music from becoming too loud. Floor managers will have immediate control over all lights, music, audio and air conditioning.

Customers are guests in our business. We will not permit loud, unpleasant or obnoxious behavior.

We will not tolerate fights among customers. Security or management will ask anyone who is fighting to leave. If necessary, security or management will call the local law enforcement agency for assistance. We will permanently refuse admittance to any chronic problem customer.

We will not tolerate illicit drug use or sales by customers or employees. Signs will be posted

throughout the establishment stating the following:

**"WARNING: Absolutely no illicit drug activity is permitted on these premises! Any person or persons caught using or selling narcotics or dangerous drugs will be prosecuted."**

We will record any serious problem (such as fights, injuries or vandalism), and how we handled the problem, in our incident log for future reference.

Security will monitor activities on adjacent property immediately outside the establishment, to prevent loitering, drinking, illicit drug activity, etc.

We will maintain a close, cooperative working relationship with the local law enforcement agency.