

Introduction

Consumption of alcohol sometimes seems like a foundation of meetings. After all, who doesn't want to have glass of wine and relax with one's colleagues or newfound networking contacts after a day in meeting sessions?

And oftentimes, the alcohol flows freely, in terms of liberal quantities and at no cost to attendees.

Nothing is free, however, so here are eight tips from leading meetings industry attorney Tyra Hilliard to help meeting and event planners limit liability when alcohol is being served

Source: <https://www.meetingstoday.com/newsevents/industrynews/-industrynewsdetails/articleid/32169/title/8-ways-to-limit-alcohol-liability-at-meetings-and-events>

1. Liability falls upon entity selling or serving

Remember liability for alcohol falls upon the entity that sells or serves the alcohol, so beware the hospitality suite!

If there is an alcohol-related incident, the sponsor would have been held liable for it.

2. Use bartenders alcohol safety awareness trained

Something like TiPS, although most states (and some companies) have their own proprietary program. Most hotel/restaurant/catering companies will tell you they train all their staff, but there is usually a 90-day window staff have to complete the training.

To mitigate against the risk of an alcohol-related incident, planners should make sure the servers at their events have already completed the training.

3. Open bars can be dangerous

Budget is not the only reason that some groups choose to have a cash bar or to give attendees a limited number of tickets for free drinks. It's also to discourage over-indulgence.

If drinks are free, it's a lot easier to over-consume.

4. Have food

Food is a mitigation measure. Not salty snacks, which will just encourage attendees to drink more, but protein-laden snacks that will fill attendees up and slow the absorption of alcohol in their system.

Alcohol - Booze Bar



5. Provide seating

Studies show that people consume fewer drinks if they are seated than they do if they are standing and milling around.

6. Have a strong indemnification clause

Have a strong indemnification clause in your contract with whomever is providing alcohol. You want to be sure that they indemnify, defend and hold harmless you and your group from and against any and all liability related to the sale or service of alcohol at a group function

7. Talk to your insurance company

It's important to find out if your commercial general liability insurance covers alcohol related incidents or whether you may need an additional rider for events that include alcohol.

8. Send a message

I often see language in hotel or catering contracts that reads, "We may refuse service to a person that is underaged or intoxicated." I change that may to will. By all means, please refuse them service!

Those are exactly the two kinds of people that are our greatest risk in terms of alcohol-related liability.

