

FAQs for Alcohol Policies at Privately Owned Facilities

Alcohol is the number one substance of abuse among youth. Underage drinking remains a major public health issue and challenge. Studies show that youth may start drinking alcohol as early as 9 years old (SAMHSA, 2013). Community and peer norms concerning the use of alcohol and accessibility contribute to this problem (IDPH, 2014). On the 2014 Iowa Youth Survey 27% of 11th Grade students in Van Buren County reported having had at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days and 81% of them said it would be easy or very easy to get alcoholic beverages in the county. Serving alcohol at private events can provide easy access to alcohol for underage persons. With effective alcohol policies, it is more difficult for youth to purchase or obtain alcohol.

Why do I need an alcohol policy? You are liable for everything that happens on your property. By having an alcohol policy in place, it puts more of the responsibility on the renter. It is also good public relations. It shows the community that you are being proactive regarding the issue of underage drinking and serving intoxicated persons.

What policy options are available? You can choose to have a no alcohol allowed policy or a policy that allows alcohol with expectations for how alcohol can be served during events. The SAFE Coalition has draft policies that you may review and utilize. The coalition can also help you draft a policy tailored to your establishment.

What is dram shop insurance? It is a policy for owners and operators of establishments that sell, serve, manufacture, or facilitate the use of alcohol. Liquor Liability protects them when they are sued for the damages their intoxicated guests cause others (insurancenoodle.com). This policy can also be utilized by event organizers who will be selling alcohol at their event. For more information on how to get this type of insurance visit this website: <https://www.generalliabilityshop.com/about-general-liability-insurance/liquor-liability-insurance/>

If it's a private party, why can't parents give their kids alcohol? It is against the law. Iowa law allows parents to give their children alcohol in their own homes. It does not allow them to give alcohol to their children in other venues.

Why must alcohol consumption occur in a fenced in area? This keeps people from leaving the specified area with alcohol. It also prohibits youth from obtaining and consuming alcohol.

Why should servers take the Merchant Alcohol Training? This is a free training that gives those who serve alcohol information about valid and fake IDs, Iowa laws regarding sales to minors, Iowa laws regarding sales to intoxicated persons, and intervention techniques to deal with a variety of situations. Taking this training may also lower your dram shop insurance.

How can the SAFE Coalition support you? The SAFE Coalition can provide you with the following FREE services; developing a policy for your facility; assistance with planning an event that includes safe alcohol service; bi-monthly Merchant Alcohol Trainings for alcohol servers; or a private training if needed; signage for your alcohol policy; many other resources related to the responsible sale/service of alcohol. The coalition also has an ID Scanner that you or your renters may rent for a small fee to utilize during events at your facility.



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