

Restricted Sales of Alcohol at Public Events

What are restricted sales of alcohol at public events?

Alcohol restrictions at public events include policies that control the availability and use of alcohol at concerts, street fairs, sporting games and tailgate parties, and other public venues. Restrictions can be voluntary or mandated by local legislation.

How do restricted sales of alcohol at public events reduce underage drinking and its consequences?

Underage youth can easily get alcohol at community events by buying it directly or by having friends over age 21 buy it for them. In response, tighter controls on alcohol availability have been shown to reduce underage drinking. Some evidence indicates that sales restrictions at public events also may reduce alcohol-related problems, such as traffic crashes, vandalism, fighting, and other public disturbances.

How can my community take this action?

Take the following steps to initiate or strengthen restrictions on the sale of alcohol at public events:

Determine whether your community has restrictions related to the sale of alcohol at public events. If such restrictions are in place, evaluate their strengths, weaknesses, and enforcement.

Whether or not restrictions exist, gather information about any alcohol-related problems associated with specific public events. This information will be helpful in promoting such ordinances.

Address the sale of alcohol at public events. Consider the following components for alcohol sales restrictions:

- ▶ Restrict the issuance of licenses at youth- and family-related community events;
- ▶ Restrict or prohibit alcohol sponsorship for community events;
- ▶ Ban the sale of alcohol at events and locations that are popular with underage youth;
- ▶ Enforce strict conditions for alcohol sales and consumption, such as:
 - Designating restricted drinking sections at special events where young people are not allowed;
 - Requiring responsible beverage service (RBS) management policies and training for workers at public events;
 - Limiting the cup size and servings of alcohol per person; and
 - Using easily recognizable cups for alcoholic beverages.
- ▶ Prohibit open containers in unsupervised public locations;

- ▶ Enforce alcohol restrictions vigorously both at public events and in public places;
- ▶ Establish standard procedures for dealing with intoxicated persons in public areas and at community events; and
- ▶ Require permits contingent on strict stipulations and RBS guidelines for private parties in public places.

Build community support for restricted sales of alcohol at public events from event organizers, law enforcement, and other community members. Public awareness activities can help the community understand the relationship between unrestricted sales of alcohol and the alcohol-related problems that occur.

Measure and report successful outcomes. Some measures of the effectiveness of restricted sales of alcohol at public events are:

- ▶ Rate of complaints from neighborhoods about public events;
- ▶ Number of event-specific law enforcement actions, such as alcohol-related arrests;
- ▶ Rates of alcohol-related crashes, injuries, and fatalities; and
- ▶ Enforcement of driving under the influence laws.

Resources Supporting Action

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *The Health Communicator's Social Media Toolkit*, from

http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/Tools/guidelines/pdf/SocialMediaToolkit_BM.pdf

(accessed January 31, 2012).

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Focus on Prevention*, from <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA10-4120/SMA10-4120.pdf> (accessed January 31, 2012).

University of Minnesota Alcohol Epidemiology Program, Community Festivals Materials, from <http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/festivals/index.shtm> (accessed January 31, 2012).