BACKGROUND

Like other universities across Canada, Queen’s has recognized the misuse of alcohol as a significant issue among some segments of the post-secondary student population, creating risks which threaten individual and community health and compromise the quality of the student experience and learning environment. To address alcohol use on campus, the first Campus Alcohol Policy was developed over the 1996-97 academic year and revised in 2001. In 2004, Queen’s established a University Council for Substance Use Prevention to consider broader alcohol campus strategies. The Council reviewed the existing policy and developed a set of programmatic recommendations to achieve three broad long-term goals:

1. a greater number of students endorsing and adopting low-risk drinking practices;
2. a positive change to the drinking subculture within the campus community in general and the student population in particular; and,
3. a greater number of collaboratively designed and developed health promotion and harm reduction programs and strategies to meet the needs of Queen’s students.

Queen’s University continues to be dedicated to supporting student health, safety and success. The institution has taken steps over the past decade to implement strategies that reflect a commitment to health promotion, education, prevention, harm reduction and enforcement activities that support our community in making safe and responsible decisions related to alcohol use, including reconstituting an Alcohol Working Group in 2006. That having been said, a recent set of events has required Queen’s to accelerate its ongoing review of alcohol-related strategies across campus. In the fall of 2010, the accidental deaths of two first year students sparked a Coroner’s investigation. As a result of the investigation, the Coroner recommended the university review and make changes to the non-academic student discipline system, alcohol policies and alcohol management in residences, and work to change the “culture of drinking on campus”. Specifically, the Coroner recommended that Queen’s should:

- undertake an accelerated review of the management of, possession and use of alcohol in residences, the feasibility of obtaining student consent for the inspection of residence rooms for alcohol, security resources, and the peer/student judicial system;
- remove health and safety issues, including alcohol, from the jurisdiction of the peer/student judiciary;
- review the Campus Alcohol Policy; and,
- develop and support educational programs directed at changing the culture of drinking on campus.

CAMPUS ALCOHOL STRATEGY

Guided by a set of key principles (Appendix I), the Alcohol Working Group will be reviewing campus alcohol policies and programs as well as designing a multi-faceted strategy across five key thematic action areas (Appendix I). As part of this larger campus strategy, Queen’s Residences is developing a Residence Alcohol Action Plan for 2011-12, which includes a pilot initiative for alcohol-free Residence Halls during Orientation Week. The following pages describe the initiative and its rationale. Other components of the Residence Alcohol Action Plan and the Campus Alcohol Strategy will be shared as they are developed.

SOURCES


Queen’s University Student Affairs
Alcohol-Free Residences during Orientation

WHAT is this initiative?
This initiative represents one objective under the “Harm Reduction and Safer Communities” theme within a larger multi-faceted Campus Alcohol Strategy that will be developed to address the five thematic strategic action areas and achieve long-term goals outlined above.

Goal 3.1 Introduce Dry/Alcohol Free Residences Policy during Orientation Week
Entry, possession, storage and/or consumption of (open or closed) alcohol (regardless of age) will not be permitted in Residence Halls (*with the exception of the Graduate Residence and Harkness International Hall) from Residence Move-In Day (Sept. 4th) through Orientation Week to 8:00 am on the 1st day of fall term classes (Sept. 12th).

WHY is this initiative being introduced?
Queen's University is dedicated to supporting student health, safety and success. Several factors contribute to the rationale for piloting this initiative at this time (Appendix II). It is important to remember that the primary purpose of Orientation Week is to introduce new students to the academic community and educational ideals at Queen's while orienting them to the physical, social and cultural environment on campus. The misuse of alcohol, especially during the first introductory weeks of a student’s time at Queen’s, creates risks, threatens individual health, compromises the educational environment and undermines our community. The institution is committed to education, prevention and enforcement activities that support our community in making safe and responsible decisions related to alcohol use.

HOW will this initiative help address the complex issues of alcohol misuse on campus?
The Alma Mater Society (AMS) and other internal and external partners will be fully engaged by the Alcohol Working Group to help design and deliver a multi-faceted Campus Alcohol Strategy to achieve identified long-term goals associated with reducing high risk drinking behaviour, fostering positive cultural change, and increasing the health, safety and wellness of Queen’s students. Strategic actions across five thematic areas (including health promotion, prevention, education, harm reduction and enforcement) will be tailored to key audiences.

HOW will we address potential real or perceived concerns associated with the initiative?
Residence Life continues to consult with counterpart institutions with similar policies to identify challenges and consider solutions and/or strategies to maximize success of the policy and minimize extraneous risk. We are developing and implementing mechanisms to track progress and evaluate the new initiative.

HOW has this pilot initiative been communicated?
Residence Life has communicated information about this pilot initiative through the following channels:
- The “Welcome Home” Student Guide to Residences was placed (as a PDF document) on Residence website and a link emailed to students on Mon, July 4th; the Guide highlights the initiative on pages 5 & 14 and also refers to the Residence Rules and Regulations as well as expectations
- Residents received email correspondence about the initiative on July 28th and August 18th
- Residence Dons/Council members will receive information and guidance on this initiative during their August training
- A link to the Residence Rules and Regulations (ResRules) Guide references expectations in relation to the initiative and a link to the “ResRules” Guide will be emailed to students on August 29th
- A special email about this initiative will be sent from the Manager of Residence Life to residents on August 29th
- Dons will reinforce messaging about this initiative throughout Orientation week through floor and building meetings

Information about this initiative will also be communicated to Orientation leaders.

HOW will this pilot initiative be enforced?
All residents agree to abide by our ResRules when applying to residence, as part of their Residence Agreement. Residences will implement this initiative in accordance with these principles and will remain committed to: progressive, educational and remedial behavioural sanctions; adherence to natural justice and due process; and, compliance with local, provincial and federal law. Residence Life staff will enforce the new initiative by requiring residents, parents, guardians and guests to immediately surrender any open or closed alcohol for disposal by Residence Life staff (or Campus Security only in the extreme case where resistance or failure to comply warrants the assistance of security personnel). During Orientation Week, there are many factors which compel Residence Life to invoke our Special Circumstances protocols for dealing with student conduct. The process for handling and consequences associated with violations of the Residence Rules & Regulations, and particularly with alcohol-related violations, is outlined in Appendix III.
Alcohol-Free Residences during Orientation Q & A

**Question:** Are there any risks associated with implementing this initiative?

**Answer:**
Residence Life and campus partners have put in place harm reduction measures and initiatives to minimize any concerns of extraneous risk (e.g. increased messaging around safety; implementation of a buddy system; extra vigilance by Dons checking in on students behind closed doors or wellness checks; enhanced and enforced guest policy, etc.)

**Question:** As a student leader or student-at-large, what is expected of me and how can I contribute positively to the overall goal of reducing risk associated with alcohol-misuse?

**Answer:**
All students are expected to:
- Read and abide by the Queen’s Student Code of Conduct
- Conform to the regulations of the University and to the law of the land, including rules and laws surrounding alcohol:
  - Underage drinking is a violation of the Liquor License Act.
  - Open alcohol is not permitted in Residence hallways, stairwells, foyers, common rooms, washrooms or elevators.
  - Games or activities that promote the over-consumption of alcohol, or the possession of large containers designed for the mass consumption of alcohol (defined as 1 litre/33.814 ounces or equivalent) are not permitted in Residences.
  - For the safety of all residents, glass beer bottles are not permitted in Residences.
  - You are breaking the law if you sell, supply, purchase or provide alcohol for/to students under the age of 19. It is your responsibility to check for proper identification.
  - Selling alcohol without a permit is illegal; you may be fined and/or be required to take alcohol education courses and/or you may face civil, criminal or university sanctions for violations.
  - If you provide alcohol to any people attending your gathering, you may be held legally responsible for their well-being and the consequences of these actions while intoxicated.

**As a student leader you have a responsibility to:**
- Find alternative, creative and fun ways to bond and build community with 1st year students without involving alcohol;
- Have candid conversations with peers about appropriate and safe drinking practices and behaviours;
- Be a role model for incoming students to help change the culture of high risk and binge drinking on campus;
- Avoid situations where you may be legally liable; and,
- Not support or go along with students who choose to violate the Student Code of Conduct or break the laws of the land.

**Question:** What are the consequences of alcohol-related violations of the Student Code of Conduct?

**Answer:**
Students are accountable for their actions both on and off campus. Non-Academic Discipline complaints may be lodged against any student who violates the Code of Conduct both on and off campus. This may include any alcohol-related behaviours that threaten the safety of students and the campus community. When a complaint is received by the Judicial Affairs Office it will be investigated. Where the office deems a violation to have occurred, sanctions may be imposed on the student. Sanctions will be restorative and educational; sanctions may include: notice of misconduct; behavioural mandate; loss of privilege; monetary penalty; and, recommendation for withdrawal, for instance. If any student, on or off-campus, is found responsible for the following activities, they will be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct: purchasing or providing alcohol to underage students; pressuring underage students to consume alcohol; and/or, participating in the promotion of excessive or rapid consumption of alcohol among underage students (e.g. some activities reported at unsanctioned “slosh the frosh”, “wreck the frec”, “wail the gael” events). Where behavior is deemed to be aggravated misconduct with the potential for significant injury to persons, the incidents may also be reviewed by University administration. The University administration may refer cases directly to the University Student Appeal Board and recommend disciplinary sanctions up to and including suspension or requirement to withdraw. Such misconduct may also result in legal consequences if the laws of the land have been broken. Off-campus misconduct that threatens the safety of students or the community should be reported to the AMS Commission of Internal Affairs at cia@ams.queensu.ca.

**Question:** Will student residents who return to Residences intoxicated be turned away?

**Answer:**
NO
- Any students who return to Residences intoxicated will not be turned away (consistent with our harm reduction approach). As is usual practice, a Don or other appropriate support will be asked to attend to the individual and provide support as needed, and depending on the circumstance. The Campus Observation Room (COR) will be open during Orientation Week and Queen’s First Aid as well as Kingston Emergency Response Services will be deployed as needed.

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1 You may be responsible for damages suffered by others if you have provided or served alcohol.
Question: Underage first year residents may wander around the student village looking for parties and this potential increased number of wandering students may result in increased disruptive behaviour, ultimately negatively affecting surrounding permanent residents. What if the initiative results in more resident students wandering in the surrounding community either intoxicated or looking for parties?

Answer:
Campus Security and Kingston Police will have a presence, as they generally do during Orientation Week, and continue to patrol the neighbourhoods in the student village, responding to requests for assistance or complaints about inappropriate or unsafe behaviours. Faculty Society/Orientation leaders, AMS Council/Executive members, student athletes and other students at large continue to play an important role in building a caring and safe community as well as role modelling positive and healthy behaviour. Students have a responsibility to comply with liquor laws as well as the University Code of Conduct.

Question: Instead of attending parties and consuming alcohol in the company of familiar friends in Residences, what if first year resident students opt to attend parties thrown by upper year students who they do not know? The pressure for first year students to drink may be greater in the company of upper year students and in the privacy of off-campus homes as compared with that in Residences where Dons have a presence and some ability to control mass consumption (e.g. drinking games). What will we do to reduce risk of harm to first year students who will not as yet have a well-established network of close friends to look out for them at such parties?

Answer:
Underage drinking in Residences is not permitted at any time and so the possibility that 1st year residents would attend parties off campus with upper year students with whom they may not be as familiar has always existed. Residence Life is increasing its messaging around alcohol consumption and safety during Orientation Week, including recommending a buddy system at all times. The AMS will also be encouraging first year students to identify and stick to their buddies throughout Orientation Week. Orientation Leaders will be encouraged to contribute to a positive and safe campus environment and reminded of the consequences of non-compliance with the laws of the land as well as the Student Code of Conduct.

Question: An alcohol-free (dry) policy in Residences during Orientation Week may be viewed as a zero tolerance approach to alcohol use in Residences. A zero tolerance approach may inhibit students from approaching a Don regarding someone they know who is dangerously intoxicated. Is there concern that this approach will not have the effect of deterring residents from drinking, counter the responsible choice message and influence more secretive drinking?

Answer:
Underage drinking is a violation of the Liquor License Act. Students who are 19 years of age or older are permitted to consume alcohol in residences with conditions (except during Orientation Week when Residences are alcohol-free). We are committed to endorsing policies and programs that promote responsible choice. These statements have applied in Residences for many years and the pilot initiative does not represent a change in philosophy nor commitment to harm reduction while adhering to the laws of the land. We see a diverse range of student behaviours in response to the existing Rules & Regulations surrounding alcohol consumption, including those who are more or less apt to approach Dons and others for assistance. We continue to be both proactive and responsive when reaching out and supporting our diverse student body.

Question: What if there are increased instances of drinking “behind closed doors” or hesitancy and even resistance from students to open doors for Dons and other Residence Life staff and University officials? With the potential for greater numbers of closed doors, will this limit the Don’s ability to ensure that everyone in the room is not too intoxicated?

Answer:
Dons have extensive training in peer helping. Their knowledge and skills around alcohol and student conduct issues is developed to help engage residents in conversations about alcohol consumption, safety and appropriate behaviour, including the need to cooperate with Residence Life and University Officials. Dons will be encouraged to increase their outreach and follow-up with students, particularly if there are students who may frequently have their doors closed.

Question: Is Residences setting unrealistic expectations? If an alcohol-related incident takes place in Residences during Orientation week, will there be criticism of the policy and/or staff.

Answer:
Alcohol use is something we can try to minimize however students who want to drink will find ways to do so. A dry/alcohol-free policy in Residences during Orientation is not a promise, nor an expectation that drinking will not take place in Residences. Instead, the goal is to signal a commitment to health and safety, to limit access and availability of alcohol (other initiatives will be implemented to complement this), and to create a Residence space during Orientation where the pressure to drink may be mitigated by limited access. Queen’s is being encouraged in its efforts to increase the health, wellbeing and safety of its students, particularly those most vulnerable to alcohol misuse in the early days of their transition to campus life.
APPENDIX I
QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY ALCOHOL WORKING GROUP

PREAMBLE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CAMPUS ALCOHOL POLICY
June 23, 2011

PREAMBLE

Queen’s University is dedicated to supporting student health, safety and success. The misuse of alcohol creates risks, threatens individual health, compromises the educational environment, and undermines our community. This policy reflects the institution’s commitment to education, prevention and enforcement activities that support our community in making safe and responsible decisions related to alcohol use.

PRINCIPLES

1. Alcohol misuse by students is a health, safety and community issue.
2. Reducing the harm associated with alcohol creates healthier, safer communities.
3. Alcohol use by students is shaped by a variety of factors such as social and personal background, wider societal norms, and campus culture.
4. Students are responsible and accountable for their choices in relation to the use of alcohol.
5. Successful responses to reduce the harm and risks associate with alcohol reflect the full range of health promotion, prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction approaches.
6. Coordinated and consistent effort is the foundation for success.
7. Students must be meaningfully involved in the development and delivery of policies related to alcohol use.
8. Effective action is based on best practices, and regular assessment.

THEMATIC ACTION AREAS FOR CAMPUS ALCOHOL STRATEGY

The five strategic action areas are:

(1) Institutional Policies and Systems
   Aim: improve coordination and coherence of campus-wide alcohol policies and systems

(2) Health Promotion, Prevention and Education
   Aim: raise awareness about responsible alcohol use and enhance the capacity of individuals and the campus community to participate in responsible decision-making and adopting low-risk drinking practices

(3) Harm Reduction and Safer Communities
   Aim: create safer communities and minimize harm related to excessive alcohol consumption

(4) Enforcement of Expectations
   Aim: implement and enforce effective measures that control alcohol availability, excessive alcohol consumption and associated unsafe behavior

(5) Research, Assessment and Evaluation
   Aim: improve understanding of perceptions, motivations and patterns of behaviour around excessive alcohol consumption among youth in post-secondary institutions as well as strategies to affect individual behaviour and cultural change to harm or injury
APPENDIX II

QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY STUDENT AFFAIRS

RATIONALE FOR ALCOHOL-FREE RESIDENCES DURING ORIENTATION WEEK

- Underage drinking is a violation of the Liquor License Act
- In 2010/11, 81% of residents were under the age of 19 on September 4th and 92% of 1st year residents were under the age of 19
- Residences are committed to enforcing existing policies which comply with the laws of the land and developing programs which promote health and harm reduction while emphasizing safe and responsible choice
- Reduced “availability and accessibility of alcohol” (Sakwa et. al, 2007, p.5) is cited as an important element in a multi-pronged approach to address misuse of alcohol
- During Orientation Week there is a lot of potential and motivation (sometimes pressure) for students to consume alcohol
- A policy for alcohol-free Residences during Orientation would clearly signal Queen’s commitment to reducing alcohol-related harm, particularly at a critical transition time when the risk of alcohol misuse among 1st year students has been known to be high
- Alcohol-free Residences during Orientation is part of a larger multipronged strategy to shift and endorse a campus culture that promotes low risk, responsible alcohol use
- An alcohol-free Residence policy during Orientation is a consistent extension of the alcohol-free nature of all sanctioned events during Orientation Week
- Several Canadian universities already employ an alcohol-free policy in Residences during Orientation (York, Laurentian, Western, Guelph, Brock, Ryerson) and Queen’s is bringing its practices in line with counterparts in the Province
- Lessons can be learned through proactive consultation with counterpart institutions to inform the development, implementation and evaluation of our strategies generally and particularly for extraneous risk mitigation
- The University of Guelph implemented an alcohol-free Residence policy during their orientation as part of a larger strategy to affect culture change in relation to health and safety and among their findings was the reduction of incidents of harm associated with high risk drinking among 1st year students during Orientation
- Residences reserves the right to implement emergency policies during special circumstances when the health and safety of individuals and the community may be endangered or compromised (e.g. guest restrictions during former Homecoming weekend; guest check-in on weekends; limiting numbers in Dining Halls during St. Patrick’s Day, etc.)
- Residence Life has determined that it can manage the implementation of the initiative by using existing non-academic discipline system infrastructure while streamlining the process due to the special circumstances presented by the timing of Orientation Week.
**APPENDIX III**

**QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY RESIDENCES**

**PROTOCOL FOR ENFORCING ALCOHOL-RELATED RULES AND REGULATIONS DURING ORIENTATION WEEK**

Residences are committed to enforcing existing policies which comply with the laws of the land and developing programs which promote health and harm reduction while emphasizing safe and responsible choice.

**In general, at all times:**
- The presence of alcohol in any instance of concerning behaviour will be documented by the staff member. The RLC, in accordance with our normal procedure will help determine the classification of offence which may include underage consumption, alcohol in Residence or other offences around the exhibited behaviour (i.e. noise, etc.).
- Possession of clearly identifiable alcohol containers (ie. beer can, liquor bottle, wine bottle, etc.) requires addressing and documentation. Staff members are not permitted to request identification, other than student ID.

**During Orientation Week, Sept. 4 – 12, 2011, it is the expectation that all Residence Dons and Council Member:**
- are required to initiate a conversation and document any alcohol in residence
- will deny the entry alcohol into residence halls, regardless of age
- will require any alcohol that does enter into residence halls to be disposed of or surrendered
- will refrain from possessing alcohol in residence

**After O-Week, we revert back to the regular process outlined in the Residence Rules and Regulations:**

As Orientation week provides opportunities to learn the ResRules an additional level of sanction progression has been included. After Orientation Week, the regular Residence Judicial Process will be in place. For clarification please see the below table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progression: Orientation week</th>
<th>Progression : After September 12</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Written Warning</td>
<td>1: Written Warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Educational Sanction</td>
<td>2: Educational Sanction and Bond ($50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Meeting with RLC</td>
<td>3: Level Two by Progression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Level Two by Progression</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Special Circumstances of Residence Rules and Regulations will apply during O-Week:**
- Alcohol in Residence Classification (1.2a Alcohol in Residence) has been changed to reflect “Any possession of alcohol during Orientation Week.”
- All documentation will occur using the eRez Residence Rules Incident Report (RRIR).
- All level two cases will fall under normal Residence Judicial Procedures (RF investigates, involves PJB/RLC for special circumstances).
- All level one cases will fall under a special circumstances period with an appeals based system for September 4 – 12, 2011.

**Special Circumstances Procedure:**
- Level one cases must be submitted by student staff by the end of that working day (as defined by rotational on-call schedule or by midnight of same day).
- RLCs, every morning, will review the cases and classify each resident’s involvement, as well as the progression of offences.
- Every morning RLCs will send out sanction letters via email to residents.
- RLCs will also email the respective dons with a list of residents on their floor who have been documented. We expect that this will facilitate informal discussions around Residence Rules and Regulations as required.

**Special Circumstances Sanction Progression:**
- **First Offense:** Written Warning.
- **Second Offense:** Educational Sanction (letter of reflection due September 10, 2011). If an alcohol infraction occurs, the sanction will focus on why the decision to move to alcohol free residence halls was made. Alternatively, a reflection of the importance of Rules and Regulations in Residence.
- Failure to complete an educational sanction will result in a $50 fine (as per normal policy).
- **Third Offense:** A meeting with the RLC. If the meeting is not able to occur during Orientation Week a letter will be sent with a scheduled meeting time.
- Appeals will be heard by the Manager, Residence Life or designate.
- **Fourth Offense:** A Level 2 by progression in our normal Residence Judicial System.
QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY
ROLE OF STUDENTS IN SUPPORTING
THE CAMPUS ALCOHOL STRATEGY

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

All students are required to adhere to the University’s Student Code of Conduct. Students have a duty to familiarize themselves with the rules and regulations of the University and determine what their responsibilities are. To view a copy of the Code please, refer to http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/policies/code2008.pdf.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All students are expected to:
- Read and abide by the Queen’s Student Code of Conduct
- Conform to the regulations of the University and to the law of the land, including rules and laws surrounding alcohol:
  - Underage drinking is a violation of the Liquor License Act.
  - Open alcohol is not permitted in Residence hallways, stairwells, foyers, common rooms, washrooms or elevators.
  - Games or activities that promote the over-consumption of alcohol, or the possession of large containers designed for the mass consumption of alcohol (defined as 1 litre/33.814 ounces or equivalent) are not permitted in Residences.
  - For the safety of all residents, glass beer bottles are not permitted in Residences.
  - You are breaking the law if you sell, supply, purchase or provide alcohol for/to students under the age of 19. It is your responsibility to check for proper identification.
  - Selling alcohol without a permit is illegal; you may be fined and/or be required to take alcohol education courses and/or you may face civil, criminal or university sanctions for violations.
  - If you provide alcohol to any people attending your gathering, you may be held legally responsible for their well-being and the consequences of these actions while intoxicated.

As a Don or Council member you have a responsibility to:
- Adhere to the Senate Contract for Orientation Leaders and Executives;
- Find alternative, creative and fun ways to bond and build community with 1st year students without involving alcohol;
- Have candid conversations with peers about appropriate and safe drinking practices and behaviours;
- Be a role model for incoming students to help change the culture of high risk and binge drinking on campus;
- Avoid situations where you may be legally liable; and,
- Not support or go along with students who choose to violate the Student Code of Conduct or break the laws of the land.

STUDENT LIABILITY AND CONSEQUENCES

Students are accountable for their actions both on and off campus. If any student is found responsible for the following activities, they will be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct:

- purchasing or providing alcohol to underage students;
- pressuring underage students to consume alcohol; and/or,
- participating in the promotion of excessive or rapid consumption of alcohol among underage students (e.g. some activities reported at unsanctioned “slosh the frosh”, “wreck the frec”, “wail the gael” events).

These behaviours may result in official complaints being lodged with the AMS Non-Academic Discipline. The AMS Judicial Affairs Office will investigate the incident and where it determines a violation to have taken place educational and restorative sanctions may be imposed on the students involved. Sanctions may include: notice of misconduct; behavioural mandate; loss of privilege; monetary penalty; and, recommendation for withdraw, for instance. Where behaviour is been deemed to be aggravated misconduct with the potential for significant injury to persons, the incidents may also be reviewed by University administration. The University administration may refer cases directly to the University Student Appeal Board and recommend disciplinary sanctions up to and including suspension or requirement to withdraw. Such misconduct may also result in legal consequences if the laws of the land have been broken.

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2 You may be responsible for damages suffered by others if you have provided or served alcohol.