

Picture by Declan Doherty
and sourced through Earagail Arts Festival



Festival Care

Guidelines on the management of alcohol
and its related harms at festivals & events

Picture by Declan Doherty and sourced through Earagail Arts Festival



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Festival Care

Guidelines on the management of alcohol
and its related harms at festivals & events

Content

Introduction	1
Guidelines for Festival Organisers	2
Communications Plan	7
Resources	11
Checklist for Festival Organisers	11
Festival Alcohol Policy Template	12
Festival Charter of Commitment Template	13
Responsible Serving of Alcohol	14
Useful Links	15

Introduction

Festivals are important events in the national calendar. They are key occasions at which to celebrate culture and the arts, heritage, sporting success, community cohesion, and local talent. They are key economic and tourism focus points in each locality and are therefore something that need to be sustained as a positive part of Irish life.

In recent times more and more people are deciding to spend their holiday and leisure time at home and this will certainly mean that attendances at town and village festivals should be on the increase.

Festivals are an enjoyable and positive experience for the majority of festival-goers. However, the misuse of alcohol and other substances has become a recurring issue at festivals with some people putting themselves and others at risk of harm.

The 'Festival Care' package aims to assist festival organisers or promoters to address the possible negative consequences that can arise from alcohol misuse by offering guidance on the management of alcohol and its related harms at events and providing a communication plan for events that focuses on issues such as personal safety and information for parents.



Festival Care Guidelines

Guidelines for Festival Organisers

Picture by Declan Doherty and sourced through Earagail Arts Festival



“A fundamental legal principle applied to events is that of taking all reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that could cause injury.”

(Faillte Ireland 'Festivals and Events Best Practice Guide')

A Step by Step Guide to Managing Alcohol at Your Festival

Event organisers have a 'duty of care' to the people who are directly affected by or involved in the event; this means taking actions that would prevent any foreseeable risks of injury. This 'duty of care' extends to the event staff, volunteers, the performers, contractors, the audience or spectators and the public in the surrounding areas.

1 Briefing of Key Services & Agencies:

Safety is obviously a key issue for any organising committee and it is a reality of modern society that the over consumption of alcohol can lead to potential safety hazards. To minimise the potential for alcohol related harms it may be necessary to brief the following at an appropriate time in the lead up to the festival or event:

- Gardai/Police
- Local Authority
- Local Health Centre / GP
- Local Hospital & Ambulance Service
- Local Community and Resident's groups
- Local Businesses
- Local Vintners

The purpose of these briefings is to;

- Develop intelligence of key pressure areas
- Raise awareness of potential support requirements
- Highlight key event timings and activities
- Develop a more joined up engagement and consultation in the design and delivery
- Create a level of shared concern

2 Briefing of Festival Staff and Volunteers:

It is essential that festival staff and volunteers attend a briefing session a few days in advance of the event. They should also receive an information pack at the briefing. The session should include:

- Basic information about the event
- The position of the festival organisers in relation to alcohol management
- Familiarise the staff and volunteers with the Alcohol Policy document
- A map and tour of the layout of the festival site depicting the areas where alcohol will be sold and served and the alcohol free areas
- Procedures to be taken in the case of an emergency

Guidelines for Festival Organisers

3 Know The Law

A festival committee should familiarise itself with the law in relation to alcohol.

- It's illegal for anyone under 18 to buy alcohol
- It's illegal for anyone under 18 to drink in a public place or pretend to be over 18 to get alcohol.
- Children under the age of 15 are only allowed in the bar of a licensed premise if they are with a parent or guardian, but even when accompanied by a parent or guardian time restrictions apply. Children aged 15 and over, but under 18, are allowed in the bar of a licensed premise unaccompanied, but again time restrictions apply.
- If you are over 18, it's illegal to buy alcohol for anyone under 18.
- A bar owner can't legally serve drink to anyone who's drunk.
- The Gardaí can take alcohol off under 18s who are drinking in a public place & contact their parents/guardians.

4 Responsible Serving of Alcohol

When briefing pubs, bars and nightclubs about your festival it might be an idea to offer them access to the Responsible Serving of Alcohol* courses on offer for bar staff, door staff and management. This is also a useful course for festival organisers as it covers the following topics:

- Overview of Alcohol and its effects
- Responsible sale of alcohol
- Underage drinking
- Preventing and managing drunkenness
- Legislation

** Please see the Resources section for information on Responsible Serving of Alcohol*

During the festival pubs, bars, nightclubs & off licences should be encouraged or even supported to;

- increase the checking of ID, particularly for those who look under age (we suggest asking anyone who is fortunate enough to look under 21)
- monitor the purchasing trends in the off-licence, eg the regular purchase by the same customer over a short period of time of large volumes of alcohol, purchasing volumes (eg several small bottles of spirits in the one purchase)
- share information with other pubs and festival organisers about those who may be trying to access or provide alcohol underage
- serve drinks in plastic glasses
- discourage the taking of bottles/glass into the street
- offer and promote competitive pricing of soft drinks or low alcohol drinks
- encourage the consumption of water by customers between rounds

Festival Charter

Each Festival may also consider development of a charter of commitment with local vintners to make the event a safe and enjoyable one for all visitors that values their custom and seeks to make the event memorable for the right reasons.

In signing this charter the owners and staff of licensed premises are committed to an enjoyable event that is based upon a safe and responsible approach to alcohol amongst all. Through the charter partners commit to the following objectives;

- The Vision of a clean, safe and vibrant event that ensures a responsible attitude to alcohol.
- The maintenance, monitoring and enforcement of standards of good practice expected of premises selling alcohol.
- Appointment of appropriate staff numbers to facilitate safe delivery of service
- The prevention of the sale of alcohol to children or people buying alcohol for children
- The prevention of admission and of sale of alcohol sale to intoxicated patrons
- Prevention of any glass emerging onto the street
- The facilitation of safe and enjoyable celebration by all patrons
- The responsible consumption of alcohol by all patrons
- The safe and responsible dispersal of all patrons at the close of business

5 Publicise Your Festival

When publicising your festival, include a safety message – this lets the general public know that you are promoting a safe event and will attract families to your event. Here are some ideas...

- Run an art competition in local schools asking pupils to design a poster about your festival including a safety message
- Link in with a local community group or family resource centre and promote a 'keep yourself safe' initiative.

6 Alcohol Free Family Zone

- Create an alcohol free area away from pubs and bars, but close to main events. This will appeal to parents and families. Locate a visible meeting point in this zone in case children or teenagers get lost.
- Print out 'time checks' for families so parents are aware of start and finish times of events.
- Identify key drop off and collection zones for parents who are leaving their children to or collecting them from the event

Guidelines for Festival Organisers

7

Event Marshals

Consider developing the role of event marshals at late events who are tasked with looking out for anyone who may be vulnerable or in need of help as a result of alcohol consumption. Consider processes that will support drunk, vulnerable or incapacitated patrons to get help and/or get home.

8

Conduct a Formal Post- Festival Debrief

- You should do this within one week of the end of the festival or event while everything is still fresh in people's minds.
- A debrief should be conducted with all stakeholders. This may be done at a single 'debriefing' meeting or a series of meetings depending on the complexity of the festival or event. It is often useful for an agenda to be circulated before the meeting.
- You should discuss every aspect of the festival or event in detail with a view to introducing further improvements for the following year.
- The minutes of the meeting should be documented so that they may be referred to in advance of next year's festival/event.
- Do remember that it is more important to discuss in detail what went wrong, rather than what went well.

Festival Care Guidelines

Communication Plan



Here are some practical, common sense tips and guidance to ensure that patrons enjoy your town or village festival this summer. These can be printed and included in your festival brochure.

Communication Plan

Everyone Play Their Part!

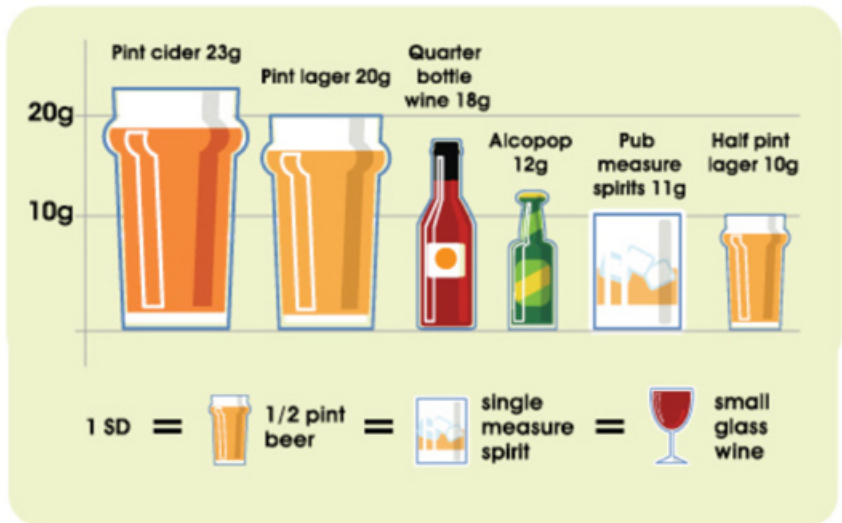
- **Adults:** Enjoy the craic but behave responsibly and be aware that the way in which you behave will be an example to younger members of your family or community.
- **Parents:** Show your children how to enjoy a festival in a responsible way, be a role model. Ensure that you are aware of how and where your child is celebrating. Be clear on the timings of the events your children are attending and agree pick-up points.
- **Young People:** Enjoy the festival but be safe. Drinking alcohol doesn't need to be part of the celebration. For young people, drinking alcohol is harmful as your body is still developing. Binge drinking makes you ill and damages your health. You are at greater risk of accidents and assaults. It makes you unsafe. It ruins your night as well as others. It's ok not to drink. The longer you delay drinking alcohol the less likely it is you will have problems in your later life

Drink Safely:

If you are going to drink at the festival, please read these handy tips.

- Eat before you go out, or during the evening.
- Ideally avoid getting involved in buying rounds or alternatively, limit rounds to 2 or 3 friends. If you find yourself in a round but feel that others are drinking faster than you - or over recommended limits - it's OK to skip a drink. Also feel free to remove yourself from the round altogether.
- Don't accept drinks from strangers. Don't leave your drink unattended. Even soft drinks can be spiked.
- Drink water regularly to stay refreshed and hydrated and use soft drinks to pace yourself.
- Avoid fizzy drinks as mixers as these increase the rate of intoxication
- Remember, alcohol or drugs can affect your ability to make safe judgements.
- Binge drinking makes you ill and damages your health. You are at greater risk of accidents and assaults.
- The choices you make when drunk may not be as good as when you are sober. Keep this in mind to avoid regrets the day after.
- Being drunk may make you feel interesting at the time but this might not be how you are seen by most onlookers.

Communication Plan



Know Your Drink

In Ireland a standard drink has about 10 grams of pure alcohol in it. There are no safe levels of drinking among teenagers but the low-risk weekly limits for adults are up to **11 standard drinks in a week for women and up to 17 standard drinks in a week for men.**

Here are some examples of a standard drink.

- A pub measure of spirits (35.5ml)
- A small glass of wine (12.5% volume)
- A half pint of normal beer
- An alcopop (275ml bottle)

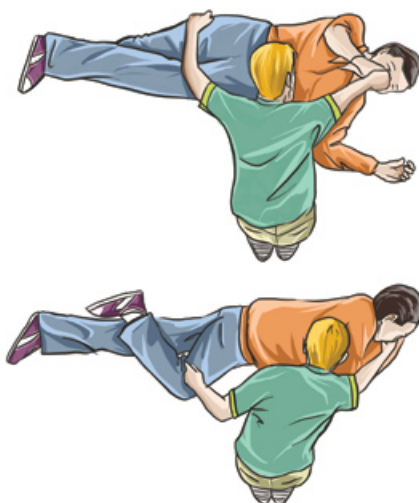
NEVER EVER DRINK AND DRIVE!

Alcohol takes time to leave your system. Allow sufficient time for alcohol to leave your system before driving.

Be Aware of Drunken pedestrians when driving near the festival!

Do You Know What To Do In An Emergency?

In a serious case of drunkenness, a person might lose consciousness (pass out). If this happens, put them in the recovery position (lying on their side), check that they're breathing and that nothing is blocking their mouth (such as vomit or an ice cube) and call for help.



Communication Plan

- Don't leave the unconscious person, make somebody else go and call an ambulance if you can't wake them up.
- If the person isn't breathing they need immediate help. Get someone to call an ambulance and shout for help from anyone who has first aid training.
- If the person is vomiting constantly or choking when they vomit then stay with them and get someone to call an ambulance.
- Try not to let drunken friends leave on their own or with a stranger. Insist on staying with them until you're sure they get home safely. Do not leave your friend alone when they are drunk.
- Don't try to walk the drunk person around.
- Do not give the drunk person anything to eat or drink – black coffee and food will not help, and they may choke.
- For sobering up, there is no substitute for time. It takes as many hours as the number of drinks taken and can take 24 hours or more for the after-effects of alcohol to wear off fully.
- Don't let a drunken friend or someone who has recently been drunk, drive home. Hide the car keys if you need to.

Local Emergency Contact Numbers:

GP / Health Centre	
Garda/Police Station	
Hospital	
Out of Hours Doctor	

And Finally

Festivals are meant to be a fun time!

Through this guide we seek to give simple ideas of how to make the most of the event for all concerned.

We truly hope your festival experience is a positive one and congratulate you for taking the time to consider the role modelling and leadership needed to make the Irish Festival a safe and responsibly supported part of our national entertainment calendar.

For more information or to book a **Responsible Server Training** course please contact:

North West Alcohol Forum Ltd.

Unit B9, Enterprise Fund Business Park

Ballyraine, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Tel: +353 (0)74 9125596 | E: info@nwaf.ie | www.nwaf.ie

Checklist for Festival Organisers

1 Briefing of Key Services & Agencies:

☐

2 Briefing of Festival Staff
and Volunteers

☐

3 Know the Law!

☐

4 Responsible Serving of Alcohol

☐

5 Publicise Your Festival

☐

6 Alcohol Free Family Zone

☐

7 Event Marshals

☐

8 Post-Festival Debrief

☐

Alcohol Policy Template

The _____
Festival Committee is committed as part of our overall Health and Safety strategy to discourage 'harmful' and 'hazardous' drinking at our festival.

Definition of 'Harmful Drinking':

A pattern of alcohol consumption that is causing mental or physical damage.

Google: [Lexicon of alcohol and drug terms \(WHO\)](#)

Definition of 'Hazardous Drinking':

A pattern of alcohol consumption that increases someone's risk of harm.

Some would limit this definition to the physical or mental health consequences (as in harmful use). Others would include the social consequences. The term is currently used by World Health Organisation to describe this pattern of alcohol consumption. It is not a diagnostic term.

Google: [Lexicon of alcohol and drug terms \(WHO\)](#)

Aim:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all Festival staff, volunteers and patrons are kept safe from the consequences of harmful and hazardous drinking.

Actions:

The _____
Festival Committee is committed to providing a safe, fun and family friendly atmosphere and will ensure that the following actions in relation to alcohol management at our festival take place.

(Add or delete actions as appropriate)

- Briefing of Key Services and Agencies
- Briefing of Festival Staff and Volunteers
- Knowledge of the Law in relation to Alcohol
- Responsible Serving of Alcohol
- Publicising of Festival with Safety Message(s)
- Alcohol Free Family Zone
- Recruitment of Event Marshals
- Post-Festival Debrief

Signed on behalf of Festival Committee:

(Chairperson)

Date: _____

Festival Charter

This charter represents a commitment to support and co-operate with the

Festival to make this event a safe and enjoyable one for all our patrons.

In signing this charter the owners and staff of these premises are committed to an enjoyable festival that is based upon a safe and responsible approach to alcohol by all

Through the Charter we commit to the following objectives:

- The vision of a safe and enjoyable festival that ensures a responsible attitude to alcohol.
- The maintenance, monitoring and enforcement of standards of good practice expected of premises selling alcohol.
- Appointment of appropriate staff numbers to facilitate an enjoyable time in our premises.
- The prevention of admission and sale of alcohol to intoxicated persons.
- Prevention of any glassware emerging onto the street.
- The responsible consumption of alcohol by all our patrons.
- The safe and responsible dispersal of all our patrons at the close of business.

Signed (on behalf of licensed premises)

Date: _____

Signed (on behalf of Festival Committee)

Date: _____

Responsible Server Training for Managers and Staff of Licensed Premises

Learning Aims & Objectives

Given the necessary instruction and training on the above topics the training recipient will:

Introduction

- Be aware of the history and reported advantages of responsible beverage training.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the drinking habits of Irish and UK adults.

Overview of Alcohol and its effects

- Demonstrate knowledge of alcohol physiology.
- Demonstrate knowledge of signs of intoxication.

Responsible sale of alcohol

- Recognise the potential risks of irresponsible alcoholic beverage service practices.

Underage drinking

- Be able to understand and execute policies related to proper age identification and intervention with an underage customer.
- Demonstrate an ability to recognise a false or altered identification.

Preventing and managing drunkenness

- Be better able to promote food and alternatives to alcohol
- Identify specific behaviours that would prompt the server or management to intervene and refuse continued service of alcoholic beverages.
- Be aware of the skills required to deal with intoxicated customers
- Demonstrate a proper attitude when dealing with customers that will support responsible service policies and identify the benefits to the guest, the server and the business.
- Understand the importance of policies and support management in the implementation of those policies.

Legislation

- Understand the law relating to alcohol for the area in which they work
- Understand how these laws relate to the alcoholic beverage server.

Local initiatives

- Demonstrate awareness of current local initiatives that have been designed to reduce alcohol misuse.

Benefits

- It is recognised that anyone responsible for the sale and distribution of alcohol should be subject to a uniform level of training and empowerment that will equip them to ensure the safe and responsible consumption of alcohol.

Useful Links

Websites:

- www.failteireland.ie/festivals
- www.aoifeonline.com
- www.healthinfo.ie
- www.nwaf.ie
- www.spunout.ie
- www.drugs.ie

Reading

- Failte Ireland ‘Festivals and Events Best Practice Guide’
- AOIFE (Association of Irish Festival Events) ‘Festival Planning and Community Involvement’



North West Alcohol Forum Ltd

Unit B9, Enterprise Fund Business Park,
Ballyraine, Letterkenny,
Co Donegal.

Tel: 074 9125596

info@nwaf.ie

www.nwaf.ie

Design by manna | www.mannadesign.net

Design of this guide has been supported by;

