



Safer nights out

Safety practices and strategies to reduce alcohol-related violence

SEPTEMBER 2009

Introduction

The NSW Government, licensed premises and the community are united in their concerns about alcohol-related anti-social behaviour and violence – and there is strong support for improving safety in and around licensed premises.

There are numerous factors that make licensed premises safe and many different parties have a role in making licensed premises and surrounding precincts safer.

This resource has been developed jointly by government, licensed premises and community representatives through the Safety Rating System Working Party, to help all concerned to better manage and reduce the risk of alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour, in order to improve safety outcomes for the community.

The Safety Rating System Working Party comprised representatives from the NSW Government, local government, industry, academia and the general public.



Prepared by the NSW Government
in consultation with the
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Consistent with **better regulation principles**, this resource has been developed to support stakeholders to **voluntarily** implement strategies that will achieve better **safety outcomes** without government imposing additional red tape or licence conditions.

Why has this resource been created?

Licensees and other stakeholders have the ability to reduce the risk of alcohol-related problems. While there is much goodwill, accessing quality information and guidance can be difficult. This resource brings together the expertise of industry, government and researchers to address this issue.

Consistent with better regulation principles, this resource has been developed to support stakeholders to voluntarily implement strategies that will achieve better safety outcomes without government imposing additional red tape or licence conditions.

What is the safety practices and strategies table?

The safety practices and strategies table is a guide to reducing the risk of alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour.

The table lists the characteristics of licensed premises, as well as external factors, that research indicates may contribute to an increased risk of alcohol-related anti-social behaviour and/or violence. Against each of these factors, the table identifies the operational-level safety practices and strategies that may mitigate alcohol-related safety risks. The identified practices and strategies are primarily drawn from research literature and the operational experiences of licensed premises and other stakeholders involved in managing alcohol-related issues in entertainment precincts and local communities.

The table includes statutory requirements in recognition that there are universal mandatory requirements under the law, for example, the requirement that all licensees and staff hold responsible service of alcohol certification.

There are three separate categories of safety practices and strategies:

Basic strategies, which are not required under legislation, but are routinely considered to complement sound business operations.

Good practices, which are considered effective in addressing a range of safety-related risks that are common to many types of licensed premises.

Additional and extended strategies, which are potentially more complex and challenging and therefore may be applied to address significant risks specific to the circumstances of an individual venue, precinct or location.

Due to the diversity of the industry and the number of variables involved, not all strategies will be effective or applicable to all types of licensed premises and contexts. The operational circumstances of each venue and location must be considered.

The principle intention of this document is to encourage licensees and managers to self-assess whether there are benefits to their business from implementing the good practices and extended strategies.

Many of the safety practices and strategies are already voluntarily adopted by licensees and venue managers, although, in some cases, particular safety practices and strategies listed in this document form part of a premises licence conditions.

Responding to new ideas

New ideas are being trialled all the time and the evidence base is always being expanded. For this reason, a table such as this will never be complete. The NSW Government will work with industry to evaluate the usefulness of this table and ensure the strategies and practices are periodically updated to reflect new research and successful on-the-ground initiatives.

How can the safety practices and strategies table be used?

The table is intended to be used by selecting the relevant information, and adapting and delivering the practices and strategies that are considered appropriate, to each operating environment, location and precinct. It is the right combination of various practices and strategies that deliver safety outcomes.

Licencees and venue managers may use the information to rate and improve their own operations, develop venue safety plans and support internal audit and risk management processes, as well as promote their commitment to venue safety and staff, patrons and the community.

Industry bodies could use the information in forums that facilitate sharing of knowledge and experience, to develop new safety initiatives or expand existing ones, to generate their own business tools and to facilitate engagement with local communities.

Community-based action groups, researchers, resident groups and consumers may find the information useful

- for expanding their understanding of safety features of licensed premises,
- informing their choice of venues, for identifying areas for action relevant to their local environment
- informing their participation in consultative processes established to address alcohol-related issues.

For compliance and enforcement authorities, this information provides the broader context of good practice which complements existing mechanisms to manage alcohol-related risks including licence conditions, compliance audits and risk assessments and information/education resources.

Importantly liquor accords could use this information to underpin the development and enhancement of accord activities.

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Who will benefit from this information?

The information in the table has many different applications that can be tailored to a variety of audiences and delivery mechanisms.

Industry

- As a tool for licensees and managers to create self-audit safety rating checklists to rate the safety of their venues.
- As a tool for licensees and managers to develop venue safety plans and review and revise safety practices and strategies.
- As a tool for licensees and managers to inform the development of appropriate house policies, codes of conduct and so on.
- As an educational resource incorporated in training courses, information seminars, inductions and the preparation of procedures manuals.
- As a communications resource for industry peak bodies to promote and encourage better business practices and management.
- As a media resource to raise the community's awareness about the positive measures in place to improve the safety of licensed premises.
- As a tool to support the development of local liquor accords.

Community and researchers

- As an information resource to help inform consumers about safety practices and strategies.
- As a resource in community planning.
- As a resource for events management.
- To assist in making submissions on liquor licence applications.
- As a resource for informing activities to develop broader community-based strategies for tackling alcohol-related problems.
- As a stimulus for identifying gaps in research/evaluation and potentially encouraging funding/grants for such work.

Regulatory authorities

- As a resource that provides a broader context for consideration of a venue's compliance history (ensuring appropriate credit is given to voluntary strategies to reduce the risk of alcohol related violence).
- As a resource to review existing audit and risk-assessment rating processes.
- As a resource for providing advice to licensees/venue managers about measures that may mitigate or address specific identified safety-related risks.
- As a resource for providing assistance to industry bodies on preventative safety strategies and measures.
- As tool that supports and informs the activities of liquor accords.
- As an information and communication resource to enhance consumers' understanding of the measures they might expect in a well-managed and operated licensed premises.



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Safer nights out > Safety practices and strategies table

In-venue characteristics and factors that may contribute to risks of alcohol-related violence	Statutory requirements	Basic strategies for consideration	Good practice for consideration	Additional and extended strategies for consideration
<p>Venue security including access and egress issues.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of entry/exit points • Staffing of entry/exit points • Managing issues at entry/exit points • Managing incidents • Inadequate or untrained security staff 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Development Applications • <i>Liquor Act 2007</i> and regulations that include provisions for imposing special conditions on declared premises; preventing entry by intoxicated, violent, quarrelsome or disorderly persons; require such persons to leave the venue and its immediate vicinity (within 50m) and prevents re-entry to the venue or its vicinity; prevent entry of under-age individuals; and require incident registers to be maintained at particular times and under certain circumstances • Legislation covering security industry personnel and operation 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand neighbourhood factors in the design and planning of venue that informs decisions about location of entry/exit points, • Ensure ease of access and egress, adequate room and lighting to vet patrons, limiting impact of queues on street/pedestrians etc • Ensure adequate staffing of entry/exit points based on a situational analysis that considers patron numbers, risk assessment of door problems etc • Employ security staff as necessary (determined with reference to venue capacity and type of entertainment provided) • Implement and follow standardised age identification & verification processes 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement recruitment/employment strategies that source the best quality security/door staff • Regularly train and retrain staff to improve skills and ensure knowledge is current • Identify staff that lack appropriate skills and provide necessary training • Ensure appropriately skilled staff are undertaking the right roles within the venue • Ensure the gender and demographic mix of venue staff is appropriate • Employ security staff skilled at negotiation, conflict resolution & defusing difficult situations • Ensure security staff are professional and proactive • Routinely review the status of security staff to ensure that licences are current (including all training, probationary and changes in legislative requirements are met). • Adopt generic industry standard for the number of security personnel relative to the number of patrons • Routinely use preventative measures including proactive crowd and queue management, monitoring of venue/room capacity and patron flow, anticipating issues and addressing problems early • Restrict entry and/or close bars if necessary • Ensure that incident response/support is adequate, fast and capable of containing an incident • Maintain an Incident Register at all times • Implement House policy/procedures on incident management including contacting Police • Implement a standard pre-closure procedure that covers the cessation of entertainment and alcohol sales, public announcements advising last drinks, commencement of clean-up by staff, removal of glassware (particularly if there are potentially 'difficult' patrons that may need to be asked to leave) etc. • Move troublemakers away from onlookers and friends to avoid the 'audience effect' • Hold quarterly security meetings with local enforcement authorities, other licensees/managers and senior security personnel. • Ensure accurate and current security reporting, record keeping and maintenance of security equipment. 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider lockouts • Consider staggered closing times in consultation with community stakeholders and precinct licensees/managers • Ensure that consumers understand their obligations concerning entry, refusal of entry and removal from the premises • Employ additional security for particular peak periods, holidays, special events etc • Encourage and support High Visibility Policing of premises and precincts • Install CCTV - Set quality for ease of review, copy and use; - Adhere to procedures and policies on maintenance and storage and when and how film should be delivered to regulators if requested. • Explore use of new technology and systems that may assist in reducing incidents • Use shared radio networks to communicate and warn licensees & security personnel at venues in the precinct of potential problems • Conduct post-event/incident analysis and revise internal policies and procedures accordingly • Establish and participate in Security Accords (similar to Liquor Accords)

In-venue characteristics and factors that may contribute to risks of alcohol-related violence	Statutory requirements	Basic strategies for consideration	Good practice for consideration	Additional and extended strategies for consideration
<p>Premises Design & Furnishing</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bar access • Pedestrian flow • Availability of seating and other furniture 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Code of Australia (safety elements are not specifically related to violence prevention) • Local environment plans • Fire Safety legislation 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure ready physical access to the bar with no unreasonable obstructions to access • Ensure seating is available 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement good design features that improve patron comfort, avoid funnelling crowds into single or small service areas, assist traffic flow and improves the overall amenity of the venue • Ensure patrons have places to put down glasses/bottles • Restrict vertical drinking zones 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that venue, rooms, seating, layout can be readily adapted to accommodate different size crowds, special events, varied entertainment etc
<p>Premises Presentation</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Style • Cleanliness • Noise levels • Lighting • Temperature • Amenities • Level of repair • Standard of furnishings • Dress standards 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health legislation • Council regulations • Anti-discrimination legislation 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue is in a good state of repair and cleanliness that reflects the standards & expectations of management • Adequate lighting to facilitate quick, safe and easy movement through venue and on exit • Well lit toilet facilities 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well lit throughout venue so patrons can safely see where they are going and the location of amenities • Adequate external venue lighting • Access to toilets on the premises • Implement a dress policy that reflects standards of venue and managers' expectations of patrons 	
<p>Entertainment & food service (where applicable)</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability and quality of food • Availability and quality of entertainment 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liquor licence specifies food requirements (varies across licence types) 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food is available during operating hours • Monitor patron response to entertainment & program it to limit anti-social behaviour 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of food options are available on the premises including meals at peak times • Use entertainment options that do not increase the risk of attracting undesirable crowds. 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of quality food options at competitive prices are available during operating hours & free finger food is provided at peak times • Vary the form of entertainment & consider cover charges to attract & encourage varied patron mix
<p>Service behaviours of staff</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowd management • Server responsibility • Serving practices • Customer service • Availability of water and non-alcoholic beverages 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Liquor Act 2007</i> and regulations that include provisions for imposing special conditions on declared premises; to prevent entry by intoxicated, violent, quarrelsome or disorderly persons, require such persons to leave the venue and its immediate vicinity (within 50m) and prevents re-entry to the venue or its vicinity; prevent the excessive consumption of alcohol on licensed premises; require that free drinking water must be available at all times when liquor is sold or supplied; require RSA certification for all licensees, staff selling alcohol & security staff 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight patron responsibilities & penalties that apply for breaches of licensing legislation • Highlight venue's responsibilities & penalties that apply for breaches of licensing legislation 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement appropriate House policies that identify drink purchase limits, restrictions on drinks with high alcoholic content, types of drinking vessels etc. • Utilise staff to monitor the floor and outside areas to identify patrons that may be approaching intoxication etc in peak periods 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise staff as RSA Marshals specifically trained to proactively monitor patron behaviour & consumption to assist early intervention action

In-venue characteristics and factors that may contribute to risks of alcohol-related violence	Statutory requirements	Basic strategies for consideration	Good practice for consideration	Additional and extended strategies for consideration
<p>Patron characteristics</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographics such as gender, subculture, age Varied effects of alcohol on individuals (eg. tendency towards intoxication) 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Liquor Act 2007</i> and regulations that include provisions for imposing special conditions on declared premises; to prevent entry by intoxicated, violent, quarrelsome or disorderly persons, require such persons to leave the venue and its immediate vicinity (within 50m) and prevents re-entry to the venue or its vicinity; prevent the excessive consumption of alcohol on licensed premises; punish intoxication on premise; barring orders for persons who are repeatedly intoxicated, violent, quarrelsome or disorderly <p>NB: Care needs to be taken to ensure that house and entry policies do not contravene discrimination legislation.</p>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> House policy that incorporates basic dress regulations Issuing barring notices to problem patrons Participating as members of local Liquor Accords to identify troublesome patrons & exchange information with other licensees & stakeholders 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> House policy that screens, as appropriate, groups such as bucks parties, hens nights that are likely to cause issues House policy that prohibits the wearing of gang colours on the premises Employment policies that encourage gender and demographic diversity of staff (including security staff) 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide décor, entertainment & offers that encourage patron diversity such as an even mix of gender & a cross-section of ages & demographics (eg. as appropriate to the venue provide a family friendly atmosphere) Implement loyalty programs to encourage patronage by locals Encourage community involvement, sponsorship and donations Assign dedicated security & RSA marshals to large functions & special events
<p>Off premises factors</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transport Street safety Queue management Availability of CCTV Management of patron flow between venues 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Housing Departments frequently ensure that minimal lighting requirements and space are included in plans for large venues Councils frequently conduct audits and/or monitor maintenance of outside venue features 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibit patrons entering or leaving a venue with alcohol Prohibit patrons from entering a venue if seen street drinking or being disorderly 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxi ranks in clear view of the licensed premise and not in areas where there is limited visibility at night Alert other licensees of problems of disorder or disruptive individuals/groups in the vicinity Use partnership models (eg. Accords, Alcohol Management Plans [AMPs]) to assist with managing patron flow between venues Use security & door staff to assist with regulating the flow of patrons between venues Introduce a 'no free re- entry' policy to address problems directly outside the venue Ensure that people do not loiter, cluster or gather outside the venue (particularly in the last hour of trade or just after closing) Ensure that internal venue conditions are such that patrons do not need to go outside (adequate toilet facilities, fresh air, seating, lighting, appropriately managed noise levels etc.) 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide limited patron transport when otherwise not available Consider assisting the funding of taxi ranks or providing security to monitor taxi ranks Ensure venue marketing & promotions outside a venue are appropriate to the neighbourhood Use shared radio networks to communicate and warn licensees & security personnel at venues in the precinct of potential problems
<p>Location & density of licensed premises</p> <p>NB. Evidence is accumulating that suggests a positive relationship between density of alcohol outlets and violence – although sometimes the research results were also dependent on other multi-faceted variables.</p>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Development Approval controls that include provisions related to neighbourhood amenity & CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design)/Safer by Design conditions, such as lighting & security Council Development Application processes that provide for the refusal of an application based on preventing cumulative impacts related to density of premises 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street lighting is provided 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ shared neighbourhood security as necessary and appropriate (determined with reference to neighbourhood and density of licensed premises) Participate in quarterly security meetings with local enforcement authorities, other licensees & managers & senior security staff Council provided CCTV 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage & support High Visibility Policing of premises & precincts Employ additional shared neighbourhood security staff for peak periods, holidays, events etc Participate in Security Accords (similar to Liquor Accords)

In-venue characteristics and factors that may contribute to risks of alcohol-related violence	Statutory requirements	Basic strategies for consideration	Good practice for consideration	Additional and extended strategies for consideration
<p>Compliance monitoring and enforcement by regulatory authorities</p>		<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcement authorities understand and have current knowledge of licensing legislation and requirements to ensure that correct and adequate support is provided to venues (particularly at venue entry) Consistently apply the law 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use premises observation reports to identify potential breaches and discuss with licensee Identify emerging trends through proper alcohol crime data in Liquor Accords Emphasise enforcement that focuses on intoxication and violence related issues Focus on the minority of premises identified as having poor practices Utilise robust measurement criteria supported by all stakeholders Reinvigorate and actively support Liquor Accords as the cornerstone of local problem solving and collaborative partnerships 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ coordinated, state-wide education campaigns for both patrons and licensees Consider a compliance process comprising education, audit then enforcement action Separate and clarify the roles of OLGR and Police Encourage High Visibility Policing of premises and precincts
<p>Unreasonable cultural expectations of some sections of the community and industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> anti-social behaviour and violence will occur in some premises and such behaviour is normative and largely acceptable drinking to intoxication is largely acceptable 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Liquor Act 2007</i> and regulations that include provisions to prevent entry by intoxicated, violent, quarrelsome or disorderly persons, require such persons to leave the venue and its immediate vicinity (within 50m) and prevents re-entry to the venue or its vicinity; prevent the excessive consumption of alcohol on licensed premises; punish intoxication on premise; barring orders for persons who are repeatedly intoxicated, violent, quarrelsome or disorderly 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers support a positive, professional and RSA culture that is reflected in the way the venue is operated and maintained Prevent patrons from entering a venue if seen street drinking or being disorderly Issue barring notices to problem patrons 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight patron responsibilities and penalties for breaches of licensing legislation 	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a Code of Conduct outlining expectations of staff, expectations of patrons, culture of RSA etc



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