



Alcohol Service at Festivals and Large Public Events

Smart Serve Tips

Why is Smart Serve Training so important?

- The course content serves as a basis for understanding one's responsibilities under the law. It aims to provide serving staff with the knowledge and awareness on the how to serve alcohol responsibly to the general public.
- It is designed to protect individual servers, event planners and corporations from liability associated with over service.
- When it comes to public safety, alcohol service and consumption, collectively, we all play a role to ensure that no harm comes to those who consume the alcohol we serve.

What are the benefits of Smart Serve Training?

- The Training Program emphasizes the importance of responsible service and it is meant to serve as a guiding tool for hospitality professionals for acceptable alcohol serving practices. It also provides insights on the do's and don'ts of current Ontario Liquor laws.

The Benefit of Smart Serve Training for Your Event Staff:

Well-trained staff with the right knowledge, the right strategy and the right attitude can help to maintain order and head off potential problems at your event.

- The permit holder is responsible for the safety and sobriety of people attending the event as well as compliance with the Liquor Licence Act.
- Notwithstanding the current Liquor Licence Act and Regulations, this course is strongly encouraged by the AGCO for all staff at SOP Events.
- Furthermore, municipalities through their Municipal Alcohol Policies (MAP) require that only Smart Serve Trained staff can work at the events.
- Be sure to obtain a copy of the Municipal Alcohol Policy for the municipality in which the event will be taking place and familiarize yourself with the exact requirements.



- The intent of these policies is to promote a safe and enjoyable environment to ensure the health and safety of participants and staff.
- In the interest of public safety and to reduce liability, municipalities have guidelines that must be met. These include:
 - Guest to Event Worker Ratios
 - Minimum age of staff/volunteers
 - Alcohol sales and service policies
 - Procedures for controlling entry to minors
 - Ensuring that no one consumes alcohol in unauthorized locations
 - Safe transportation options (e.g., designated drivers, taxis)
 - Emergency response procedures

Who Should Take the Smart Serve Course?

- Servers
- Bartenders
- Ticket Sellers
- Security
- Floor Supervisors/Monitors
- Permit Holders



About the Training

The Smart Serve Training is available in 2 formats: online and in-house.

Online Training:

- Can be completed anytime/anywhere.
- Takes approximately 4 hours to complete. Once the final test is submitted the participant is notified immediately of their results.
- To ensure the integrity of the testing protocol, all online exams are proctored. These testing standards help Smart Serve ensure that only qualified participants are issued their Smart Serve certificates.
- To assist with language barrier the online course is available in:
 - English
 - French
 - English with Mandarin audio
 - English with Cantonese audio
 - English with Korean audio
 - English with Spanish audio

In-house training:

- This format of delivery is designed to be administered by either a professional trainer or an in-house appointed facilitator.
- This format sets an ideal stage for a face-to-face exchange of information on your philosophy of responsible alcohol service and consumption for both the guests and staff.

Regardless which delivery format suits your needs best, the participant will be exposed to the same content.



What does the course content include?

Smart Serve training includes educational content in the following core areas:

1. Age Identification

Why check ID:

In Ontario, serving alcohol to anyone under 19 years is an offence under the Liquor Licence Act (LLA) and can lead to charges by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario and the police.

When to check ID:

- When a person looks younger than 25 years of age
- Body language or behavior is unusual, for example, avoiding eye contact or trying to rush the process

What are the Acceptable forms of ID:

- Valid provincial driver's licence or out-of-province photo driver's licence
- Armed forces identification card
- Valid Passport
- Certificate of Indian status
- Canadian citizenship card
- Permanent resident card issued by the Government of Canada
- Photo card issued under the *Photo Card Act, 2008*
- Bring Your Identification (BYID) card issued by the Liquor Control Board of Ontario
- NEVER accept student cards or expired ID

How to check ID:

- Examine in a well-lit area
- Tilt the ID under light to see all of the reflective seals and holograms flash
- Check the overall condition of the card – minors often use the expired licence of a family member or friend
- Visually and manually confirm that the ID's size, weight and shape are normal and that the photo, lettering and lamination haven't been switched, altered or tampered with
- Check for uneven surfaces and edges as well as cuts or bubbles in the laminate



What to check:

- Does the person actually look old enough to be the person on the ID?
- Does the ID verify that the person is over the legal drinking age?
- Are the letters in the same font and same size of font?
- Beware of misspelled words or disclaimers
- Compare ID photo and description- height, weight, eye and hair colour are the most likely and easiest to change, pay attention to the shape and size of the facial features
- If the colours are dull/faded or if the birth or expiry dates look scratched or appear to have been tampered with – do not accept the ID
- Ontario Drivers Licence picture is in black and white – consider checking other features such as: shape of face, cheek bone structure
- Ontario Drivers Licence states height in cm-if not familiar with this unit of measurement – know your own height both in inches and cm for comparison
- Keep on file a copy of a current legitimate ID available for comparison
- In Ontario, the health card can only be used as secondary piece of ID and can only be accepted if offered

What to do when the Person & ID Aren't a Real Match:

It is your right and responsibility to ask for additional ID if you have any concerns about the identification that has been presented to you. If you still have doubts about the validity of the ID, you might want to consider asking the following questions:

- What is your birthday?
- How do you spell your middle name?
- What is your postal code? Your street address?
- Ask the person to sign a blank sheet of paper and compare the signature to the one on the ID
- Again, pay attention to body language and behaviour



2. Recognizing signs of intoxication and factors affecting Blood Alcohol Concentration

Although individual reactions to alcohol may vary, people follow certain general patterns as they approach intoxication.

There are 10 main signs that indicate your customer is becoming drunk. These signs may appear in any sequence, depending on the individual:

- Stumbling or staggering
- Poor hand-eye coordination
- Changes or difficulties in speech
- Nausea and sweating
- Sleepiness and breathing changes
- Blurred vision
- Overconfident or acts inappropriately
- Confused or less alert
- Aggressiveness
- Inappropriate speech volume

3. When to deny entry

When the individual is:

- Intoxicated
- Under Age
- Fake ID
- Disruptive
- Maximum capacity has been reached
- Drugs/Prostitution

4. Understanding the effects of alcohol

Factors affecting Blood Alcohol Concentration include:

- Body Size/Fat
- Food
- Weight
- Gender/ Age
- Physical Health/Fitness
- Number of drinks per hour



5. Preventing liquor law violations

Prevention vs intervention:

Education and knowledge are the best tools in preventing intoxication. Educating the guests ahead of time is just as important as educating your staff.

Importance of Standard Operating Procedures or Alcohol and House Policies

Clearly written Standard Operating Procedures can serve a dual purpose.

- They let staff know how you want things done and provide guidance on how to handle difficult situations
- They inform the guests of your acceptable code of conduct

Well written alcohol policies are there to reinforce positive behavior as well as outline the consequences associated with breaking the house rules.

What to include in the Standard Operating Procedures?

Staff Policies

- Prohibiting alcohol consumption during the event while on shift
- Guidelines on how to deal with aggressive, unruly and intoxicated guests
- Reminders on how to deal with difficult situations
- Strategies for dealing with underage guests
- Checking ID protocol
- How and when to report inappropriate activities
- Offering alternative modes of transportation (taxi numbers, chits)
- Free water and non-alcoholic drink practices
- When and how to complete incident reports
- All staff /volunteers are required to provide proof of age (check MAP for age restrictions)
- Maximum number of tickets sold per person
- Number of drinks served per person per visit to the bar (check MAP for specifics)
- Guest-to-staff ratio - to ensure the safety of your customers (check your MAP for details)

Guest Policy:

Guest Alcohol Policy should be posted in a visible place. These policies should inform the guests of the following:

- No person under 19 years of age will be allowed to buy, consume or be supplied with alcohol



- Photo identification with proof of age must be produced on request by anyone wishing to consume alcohol
- No person who appears to be intoxicated will be served alcohol
- Any activities that involve a reasonably foreseeable risk of harm will not be allowed and guests will be asked to leave the premises
- Safe transportation options will be made available to help reduce and prevent risks of harm for those who appear to be intoxicated
- Free non-alcoholic drinks will be made available for designated drivers
- The maximum number of tickets sold per person

Alcohol Management Plan

What to include:

- Instructions for conducting a thorough safety inspection of your premises
- House/alcohol policies and procedures
- Emergency action plan that includes a chain of command
- A monitoring system to ensure that alcohol is not consumed by underage guests or consumed to excess by those who are of age
- Communication channels
- Safe transportation options
- When and how to record incidents

IMPORTANT: PRE-SHIFT MEETINGS ARE AN IDEAL WAY TO REVIEW AND REINFORCE THE RULES OF RESPONSIBLE SERVICE AND CONSUMPTION WITH YOUR STAFF.