

# NEW HAMPSHIRE LIQUOR COMMISSION

Bureau of Enforcement and Licensing

## House Policy Development

*A Guide to Developing Responsible Business Practices for On-Sale Licensees*



## Introduction

Your business is very important. It is valuable to you, your community, and to the State's economy. You have invested your time, energy and financial resources. Your business offers a place that meets local dining and entertainment needs and provides jobs. The best way to protect your valued business is through responsible business practices. Responsible business practices can help reduce your risk of criminal or administrative charges, and civil lawsuits.

Responsible business practices promote profitability and ensure a comfortable and safe environment for your customers. You should document your responsible business practices in the form of written house policies. If you have none, each employee may have his or her own idea about what the rules are, what they mean, and when they should be applied. House policies offer practical solutions to common problems faced by licensed establishments. With good house policies in place, your employees will not have to make difficult judgment calls about who to serve or how to handle a tough situation - they know what to do because their responsibilities and your expectations are clearly spelled out.

The portion of your house policies for customers are public documents that should be posted in highly visible locations as they are a set of house rules concerning customers' entry and behavior while in your establishment. The portion of your house policies for staff is directly related to the portion for customers, in that it communicates management's expectations of staff regarding sale of alcohol and instructions for denying entry and ejecting undesirables. These policies indicate your establishment's responsible serving practices and intention to comply with the law and should be shared with the Bureau of Liquor Enforcement, the local police, your insurance company, and the community along with your patrons.

This manual is intended to provide guidelines to assist you in developing your own house policies as well as model policies which you can use when creating your policies. You may want to use our "Model House Policies" or modify them to meet your own specific needs, but three factors are common to all successful policies. In order to work, house policies must be written, communicated to your employees and supported by management. Your employees must know that you will back them if they deny service to any customer or ask an unruly guest to leave. House policies create a framework within which your customers can enjoy themselves and your employees can operate both effectively and efficiently. In the long term, the responsible business will build a strong and loyal customer base.

# Policy Development Guidelines

## When Developing House Policies...

- You may have a company policy that does not conflict with existing laws (for example, no discrimination).
- It is always good to obtain ideas from your managers and employees when writing new policies. They will be more supportive of policies they helped to create.
- Make sure policies are clear and specific.
- Provide all employees with a copy of the policies.
- To ensure that employees have read and understand the house policies, have them sign an Employee Acknowledgement Statement (Appendix A). Keep this in each employee's personnel file.
- Reinforce policies by giving regular training to employees.
- Between trainings, hold regular staff meetings. At the meetings, discuss the rules, recent problem situations, and ways to prevent future problems.
- Advise employees that you will spot check their compliance with the policies. Give them a regular performance review.
- Reward employees who do a good job. Provide rewards to those who engage in anti-drug events. Remember: Written policies, good communication, and a supportive environment will go a long way toward the success of your business.
- Review and update your policies regularly (annually if possible). This will ensure that your policies retain their relevancy and do not conflict with state law or administrative rules.

## Market Your Position

- Explain and market your program internally with incentives and to customers (tent cards, posters, posted policies)
- Indicate that you wish no customer to drink to intoxication
- Develop a Mission Statement and post it prominently

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### MODEL MISSION STATEMENT

*"The goal of our establishment is to be successful by providing responsible, courteous, safe and professional food and beverage service. We will serve customers in a responsible, friendly, and professional manner. We are committed to adhering to all liquor laws while assisting customers in their decision to drink responsibly"*

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## Monitor Your Door

- Post a sign indicating that management reserves the right to deny entry to intoxicated and/or underage persons
- Assign a staff member that is trained in responsible service practices to monitor the door at all times to:
  - Check for age and fraudulent identification
  - Deny entry to intoxicated people
  - Count the number of people on premise to prevent overcrowding and exceeding the legal capacity and provide for a proper customer to staff ratio
  - Allow free access to law enforcement personnel

## Market Food Actively

- Provide a range of food menu selections
- Have low-cost, low-salt snacks or food at all times
- Offer reduced food prices during late afternoon/evening

- Provide incentives to servers for increased food sales

### Responsible Beverage Pricing

- Do not promote drink specials, happy hours or discounts
- Do not serve the equivalent of several drinks in oversized glasses - use standard glassware
- Price non-alcoholic products competitively with alcohol products

### Promote Alternative Beverages

- Stock a good selection of light and non-alcoholic beer and wine
- Price non-alcoholic products competitively with alcohol products
- Promote non-alcoholic drinks
- Serve alcohol-free drinks in containers that are easily distinguishable from alcohol drinks
- Evaluate servers on total sales including non-alcoholic products

### Train All Staff

- Have all staff trained in a good responsible-server class
- Provide all staff with a copy of the establishment's house policies and train them on how to use it
- Keep an incident log of problem situations (Appendix B)
- Regularly review the policy and the incident log with all staff
- Prohibit drinking on the job by all staff and managers

### Adopt a Safe Transportation Plan

- Identify and rank transportation options
- Confirm necessary arrangements with outside companies
- Ensure your employees feel comfortable in their understanding of when to use the program
- Advertise your program

## Never Serve Underage Individuals

- Verify that all servers are legally old enough to serve beverage alcohol
- Ensure that staff understand their legal duty regarding service to underage and intoxicated individuals and provide them with clear guidelines on how to deal with these individuals
- Establish with staff when to ask for identification
- Train staff on how to identify underage customers
- Identify what forms of identification are acceptable
- Train staff on how to recognize a fake ID and what to do when one is presented
- Serve alcohol-free drinks in containers that are easily distinguishable from alcohol drinks

## Monitor Drinking of Customers

- Provide staff with guidelines for recognizing the signs of intoxication
- Promote the service of one standard drink at a time and in a reasonable time frame (i.e. one standard drink per hour)

## Manage the Intoxicated Individual

- Deny entry to intoxicated customers
- Monitor consumption of customers to avoid intoxication
- Deny further service to intoxicated customers
- Ensure staff are aware of effective ways to deal with intoxicated individuals
- Reinforce policies by giving staff incentives for effectively discouraging and managing intoxicated individuals

# Model House Policies

To: All Employees

From: Management

Subject: Reducing Youth Access to Alcohol

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- It is everyone's job to ensure patrons who are buying or drinking alcohol are at least 21 years of age.
- We will request proof of age (I.D.) from any patron who appears 30 years of age or younger. To help employees do their job, managers will post the following sign in the business: "NOTICE: Our employees request I.D. from any patron who appears to be under age 30. Thank you for your cooperation."
- We have the right to, and will, refuse service to any patron who cannot produce proper I.D.
- All servers and door personnel will be trained on a regular basis to ensure that they have the most up to date and relevant information concerning their responsibilities regarding the state's alcoholic beverage laws and regulations. We will know what are considered legally acceptable forms of identification for the purchase of alcoholic beverages.
- We may accept the following as proof of age:
  - A motor vehicle driver's license issued by the state of New Hampshire, or a valid driver's license issued by another state, or province of Canada, which bears the date of birth, name, address, and picture of the licensee.
  - An identification card issued by the director of motor vehicles under the provisions of RSA 260:21, or any picture identification card issued by another state which bears the date of birth, name and address of the individual.
  - An armed services identification card.
  - A valid passport from a country with whom the United States maintains diplomatic relations.
- When selling pitchers, we will request an I.D. from each person who receives a glass.
- We will use a pre-printed age chart as a quick way to figure age. The age chart, which says, "To Buy or Consume Alcohol, You Must Have Been Born on or Before [date]," will be updated daily.
- We will use separate types of glassware to tell alcoholic drinks from non-alcoholic drinks.
- When an underage patron moves from one station to another, servers will tell each other.
- If we must refuse service, we will tell a supervisor.



To: All Employees

From: Management

Subject: Advertising, Promotions and Pricing

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- We will maintain an atmosphere that promotes socializing. We will provide things to do other than drinking.
- Advertising materials and campaigns will not use alcohol as the main way to attract patrons.
- We will not use promotions that encourage intoxication. There will be no drinking contests. We will not advertise, "Buy one drink, get one free, two for the price of one, or all you can drink." (These are against the law.)
- We will not offer free alcohol or sell them below cost. (This is against the law.)
- We will not lower alcohol prices to promote sales.
- We will not promote a "Happy Hour" because this promotes too much drinking. We will use food or entertainment for cocktail-hour specials. For example, we will have a "Hungry Hour." Appetizers will be free or offered for a low admission price. This brings in patrons and holds down intoxication.
- We will not promote drink specials to certain groups of people. For example, "Ladies' Night." (This is against the law.)
- When we promote a special cocktail, wine or beer, we will offer a comparable non-alcoholic drink. If we promote or list alcohol on a menu or display, we will promote a non-alcoholic drink also.
- We will promote food and other non-alcoholic items using table tents.
- If we offer free appetizers or snacks, we will offer them to any patron, whether or not the patron buys alcohol.

To: All Employees

From: Management

Subject: Drink Service

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- Management and supervisors will support servers' decisions to stop or refuse service to any patron. If they don't, the server might not act so responsibly in the future.
- We will discourage intoxication and not serve any person who looks or acts intoxicated, even if they are taking a taxi or have a "designated driver." This includes employees and regular patrons who may "always act that way."
- When a patron has been "cut off" in one person's station, that person will tell other employees.
- During shift change the outgoing server will brief the oncoming server regarding the length of time a patron has been at the establishment, what they have been drinking and how many drinks they have had. This will help the oncoming server to avoid over serving the patron.
- Responsible service techniques may reduce a server's tips. Therefore, we guarantee the tip to any server who stops service to a patron who displays signs of intoxication.
- Drinking alcohol during your shift, after your shift, or at closing time is not allowed. Drinking on the job impairs your ability to perform your duties. You are more likely to make mistakes in judgment such as serving underage or obviously intoxicated patrons. Drinking on the job can cause other employees to assume some of your duties without getting paid for the extra work. This can create bad morale. Also, it is harder for you to tell a patron they are "cut off" when you have been drinking along with that person. Lastly, drinking on the job is against the law.
- We will not assume a patron wants alcohol. Instead of saying, "May I bring you a cocktail?" say, "May I bring you a beverage?"
- We will promote "alternative beverages." This is any beverage that can take the place of alcohol. The purpose is for pacing drinking, slowing intoxication, preparing to drive, or offering a beverage choice besides alcohol. Examples are: coffee, juices, mineral water, flavored waters, seltzer, non-alcoholic or low-alcoholic content beverages.
- We will provide and promote "mocktail" non-alcoholic drinks that are similar to popular cocktails.
- We make sure that we know who is getting each drink. We will not bring a drink for anyone who is not present.
- We will count drinks.

- We will use measured shots, rather than free pouring to ensure against over pouring. (Shots will be one ounce, rather than 1-1/2 or 2 ounces.)
- We will not sell more than one drink to a patron at one time.
- We will not sell pitchers to individual patrons.
- We will not bring a second drink before the patron has finished the first one.
- We will discourage the buying of rounds.
- We will not push drinks.
- We will slow down service if the patron is ordering or drinking rapidly. We will visit the table less often and avoid the table until all patrons have finished their drinks.
- At closing time, we will announce, "It's closing time. We will pick up all drinks in \_\_\_\_ minutes." We will not announce "last call" because this encourages patrons to gulp drinks before driving. We do not believe in "one more for the road."
- Bartenders will follow our standard drink recipes.

To: All Employees

From: Management

Subject: Safe Rides

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- If a patron is too impaired to drive safely, we will persuade the person not to drive, and arrange for a safe ride. If the patron refuses, employees should advise a supervisor. The supervisor will call the police with a description of the patron, description of the vehicle including the license plate number, and the direction of travel the vehicle took when leaving.
- We will post a list of taxi phone numbers at each bar, hostess station, and pay phone.
- We will use the "Designated Driver" Program. The server will ask groups of three or more who the Designated Driver will be. The Designated Driver may receive free non-alcoholic drinks and/or food such as an appetizer or dessert. If the server sees the Designated Driver drinking alcohol, the Designated Driver must pay for all drinks and food he has consumed. "Designated Driver" does not mean that employees may over-serve others in the group.

To: All Employees

From: Management

Subject: Staff Training

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- All staff will be trained in responsible beverage service.
- All staff will be provided with a copy of our house policies and trained on how to use them.
- We will keep an incident log of problem situations.
- We will regularly review the policy manual and the incident log with all staff.
- All staff will be continually updated by management (meetings, memos, etc.).
- We will provide extra training for employees who need practice in serving alcohol.

To: All Employees

From: Management

Subject: Food Service

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- We will promote food during the late afternoon and evening hours. Appetizers will be available in the bar until closing time. We will offer high-protein or fatty foods such as meats and cheeses, which slow the absorption of alcohol. We will avoid salty, crunchy items because they cause patrons to drink more.
- We will provide rewards to servers for increased food sales.
- Servers will be rewarded for total sales, including non-alcoholic products.
- We will promote non-alcoholic drinks with table tents.

To: All Employees

From: Management

Subject: Crowd Control and Security

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- We will allow free access to all state, county and local law enforcement officers (All of whom may be wearing uniforms or plainclothes.)
- Overcrowding will not be allowed for several reasons. First, it makes us less able to watch our patrons. This can result in sales to minors and intoxicated patrons, fights, injury, and property damage. Second, patrons may not be able to exit the building during a fire or other crisis. Third, too many patrons can lead to more mistakes, poorer service, and smaller tips.
- We will limit our patrons to the Fire Department's legal limit. During busy times, door people will track the number of people coming in and out of the business.
- We will have enough employees on duty. This will help us watch beverage sales and patrons. We will advise management when more staff is needed.
- We will keep patrons from crowding around the bar. We will make sure patrons are able to move freely in hallways, aisles, and common areas.
- To encourage socializing, we will provide table seating for groups of different sizes, games, and other non-drinking fun. We will keep the lighting from getting too dim and the music from getting too loud. Floor managers will have instant control over all lights, music, audio, and climate controls.
- Patrons are guests in our business. We will not permit loud, unpleasant, or obnoxious behavior.
- We will not tolerate fighting amongst patrons. Security or management will ask anyone who is fighting to leave. If needed, security or management will call the police for help. We will permanently refuse to admit any chronic problem patron.
- We will record any serious problem (such as fights, injuries, or vandalism) in our Incident Log for future reference.
- Security will monitor outside adjacent property to prevent loitering, drinking, illicit drug activity, etc.
- We will maintain a close working relationship with law enforcement.

To: All Employees

From: Management

Subject: Drug-Free Workplace

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- We will not tolerate illicit drug use or sales by patrons or employees.
- It is a violation of company policy to possess, sell, trade, or offer illegal drugs for sale or engage in the illegal use of drugs on the job.
- It is a violation of company policy to use or be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol at anytime while on or using company property, conducting company business or otherwise representing the company.
- Violations of this policy are subject to (letter of reprimand/suspension from work without pay/dismissal).



## Employee Acknowledgement Statement \*\*

I hereby acknowledge that I have received the (Business Name) House Policy Manual.

Further, I acknowledge that I am responsible for having read and understood this manual's policies, additions, or amendments as they may be applicable.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# INCIDENT DOCUMENTATION FORM\*\*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM  
Patron Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
Age of the person \_\_\_\_\_ Verified or Approximated (circle one)  
Physical Description of Patron \_\_\_\_\_

1. Was the patron's ID checked? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ By Whom \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of ID presented \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_
2. Time the patron arrived \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM Time departed \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM
3. Where was the patron before your place? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number and types of drinks served: \_\_\_\_\_
5. In what amount of time were the drinks served? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Was the patron injured? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Describe the injury \_\_\_\_\_  
Was medical attention given? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Was hospitalization needed? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
How did the patron contribute to the injury? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Were law enforcement authorities called? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Time of the call \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM Who made the call? \_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s) of the officer(s) responding: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Did the patron drive from the establishment? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
9. Auto Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_  
License Number & State \_\_\_\_\_
10. If the incident occurred outside, describe weather conditions: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Describe the incident, (including eyewitness accounts) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Witness #1 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
Witness #2 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person completing the form \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* This form may be duplicated without the permission of the New Hampshire Liquor Commission.