

SAFE CELEBRATIONS GUIDE.

Why celebrating safely matters

Clubs have a powerful opportunity to influence members' behaviour – to ensure they can enjoy themselves while staying safe during off-field events.

Whether marking a team win or acknowledging supporters' hard work, celebrations are a big part of what makes clubs tick. Ensuring all club members understand the kind of behaviour that is expected of them is critical. It matters how they behave at the club and when representing the club out in the community.

Here is a guide showing how your club can promote its expectations for member and visitor behaviour, to keep everyone safe, healthy and happy during celebrations.

What are the risks?

Winding down after a game, victory celebrations and especially end-of-season parties have the potential to involve risky levels of alcohol consumption. But being intoxicated increases the likelihood of dangerous behaviour, illness and injury.



SAFE CELEBRATIONS GUIDE.

Health risks

Clubs are encouraged to support their members to stay healthy and safe. The short-term health effects of risky levels of alcohol consumption include:

- nausea
- vomiting
- in extreme cases – death
- clumsiness
- memory loss
- blurred vision
- loss of consciousness

Risky levels of alcohol consumption can lead to increased health risks for an individual, as well as the risk of damage to property.

People who are intoxicated are more likely to endanger themselves and others with their behaviour – like going swimming, drink-driving, having unsafe sex or becoming violent.

Long term effects of consuming alcohol at risky levels include increased risk of cancers, liver damage, alcohol dependence and chronic disease.¹

Reputation and legal risks

Incidents caused by risky levels of alcohol consumption can also damage a club's reputation. That damage can easily spread throughout the entire league. The club could incur sanctions and fines and even attract negative media coverage.

All this can impact on funding from councils or sponsors. It can damage perceptions that the club is family-friendly, leading to a drop in membership. The time spent by club officials repairing the damage is likely to be considerable.

There is also an increased risk that clubs could be legally liable for any harm caused if they promote and endorse activities involving alcohol consumption.

What can clubs do?

Communication is key. By being part of the Good Sports program, clubs will have an alcohol management policy in place or be working towards one. This policy, and the consequences of not adhering to it, must be clearly understood by all players, volunteers, members and club officials.

To reduce risks to individuals and organisations, sporting clubs should not endorse or support events that involve risky levels of alcohol consumption and should discourage fundraising through the bar.

A risk assessment before an event will identify likely hazards, the amount of damage they could cause, and indicate what precautions are needed to prevent incidents from happening.

References:

[1] Callinan S, Livingston M. Australian drinkers who harm others: a snapshot. Harm to Others from Drinking. 2019:31.

SAFE CELEBRATIONS GUIDE.

Make things clear



1. Ensure your policy for staying safe while celebrating is well promoted and understood by everyone. Clearly explain what the club considers unacceptable behaviour:
 - drunk /disorderly behaviour
 - drink driving
 - damage to property
 - violence and assault
 - verbal abuse
 - any form of harassment
 - anything that may bring the image of the club into disrepute
 - anything against the law.



2. Provide a pre-event team talk around respectful behaviour and lower-risk alcohol consumption.



3. Make sure everyone understands the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.



4. Meet with organisers of all on-site events and discuss what is planned.



5. Comply with liquor license requirements. Preferably no one under 18 will be involved in an event where alcohol is served.



6. Encourage regular meals, snacks between meals and provide non-alcoholic drinks.



7. Watch out for players who might be injured, suffering from concussion or on medication. Encourage them not to drink alcohol.



8. Consider a buddy system, where participants agree not to drink and look after others, particularly younger members of the team.



9. Ensure people have safe transport home.