



Leader Tool Alcohol and Workplace Functions

Work functions and events at this time of year are often seen as a reward or celebration, a time to relax and connect individuals and teams. Promoting an environment where your people can safely enjoy this time will help ensure that the event is a success. This year's lockdown and the anxiety associated with the pandemic has been linked to an increase of up to 20% in alcohol consumption which includes concerning figures on parents drinking in the presence of children. Lockdown was long enough for increased drinking to become habits which can prove to be hard to break. Workplaces have a duty of care to provide a safe environment that includes work organised function and events.

Here are some strategies to think about for your next function or event:

Promote options where alcohol is not the leading entertainment or focus. Picnics and outdoor venues where physical activities can be organised helps to give people opportunities to comfortably avoid alcohol. Similarly, games and team challenges such as trivia can do a similar thing indoors.

When alcohol is provided, then there are clear guidelines to follow, they include:

Responsible Service of Alcohol

This means selecting licensed venues where bar staff are trained in the Responsible Service of Alcohol.

Be clear and upfront about your workplace policy

Make sure you communicate your policy and expectations around behaviour. Everyone should be clear and given time to clarify before the event if necessary. There may be concerns that this will "put a damper" on the event; however, if an incident occurs, the repercussions could be significant.

Inform people on a healthier use of alcohol

Make available tips and advice on how to stay within low-risk drinking limits and the [new Australian Guidelines](#) to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol.

Food and entertainment over alcohol

Select a venue or catering which will provide a range of quality food options and cater for all dietary needs. End of year/Christmas parties are supposed to be a celebration, try to look at allocating budget in favour of good food and/or entertainment. Ready access to water and non-alcoholic options should be standard.

Consider limiting alcoholic drinks to beer and wine without spirits of high alcohol content beverages. Standard or smaller sized wine glasses and bar service rather than table service refill can help people manage their consumption. Allow some time for tea and coffee with alcohol service finishing 30mins to an hour prior to this.

Consider transport options

Different people process alcohol differently, and although consumption guideline is useful if an individual is overly affected, they will need transport options to get home safely.

We are here to support you so that you can better support your people. If you have any further questions or would like to discuss a specific concern contact our Manager Support Hotline or your Relationship Manager. As always, as your EAP we are here to support your people whatever the nature of their concerns, please contact **AccessEAP** on **1800 818 728**.

AccessEAP acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land we work on and their continuing connection to land, culture and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

