



BYOB:

HOSTING SAFE SOCIAL EVENTS





USING THIS GUIDE

This guide has been designed to assist chapters in planning and implementing safe Bring Your Own Beverage (BYOB) social events. When using this guide to better understand the strategies for holding a successful BYOB event, please remember that your event should follow all applicable guidelines and policies for social events and the use of alcohol. This includes any and all guidelines policies and rules from your Interfraternity Council, campus, and inter/national fraternity. The most specific / stringent guidelines are to be followed at all times.

This guide is not a policy manual, but rather a resource to be used in understanding risk as well as planning safe and functional events that follow generally accepted BYOB guidelines. For specific questions beyond this guide, you should contact your inter/national fraternity as well as your campus fraternity advisor.

The North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) is a member of the Fraternity Information and Programming Group (FIPG). The suggestions and framework of this manual are consistent with the Risk Management Policy of FIPG, which is the policy that has been adopted by many inter/national fraternities and sororities as well as individual host institutions. The NIC appreciates the support of FIPG in the publication of this resource. For specific policy information or to obtain a copy of the FIPG Manual, please refer to www.fipg.org.

GAUGING YOUR RISK

Fraternity and sorority parties and events can be risky business. Chapters and members often assume that nothing can be done to reduce our risk and limit our liability. This is incorrect. While it is impossible to completely eliminate your risk and potential exposure to liability as a chapter, there are measures that you can take to greatly reduce your risk.

Low risk: Substance-free events, third party vendor events, BYOB events

High risk: Pseudo BYOB events without guidelines and regulations

Very High risk: Contributing chapter funds for alcohol-related events, drinking games and/or forced consumption of alcohol, open parties with alcohol, charging at the door for alcohol-related events, bid day / “big” events with alcohol

Risk is a part of life; every day, and in every walk of life. However, there are a great number of measures you can take to reduce your risk. Just like choosing to look both ways before walking across a street significantly reduces your risk of getting hit by a bus; choosing the appropriate way to manage your upcoming social event reduces the level of risk assumed by your chapter. Substance-free events, events with a caterer or third party vendor, or BYOB events (as they are defined in this guide), expose your organization to minimal risk.

In assessing the level of risk for an event, it is useful to ask yourself two questions:

- Was it foreseeable or predictable that under the circumstances someone may be injured?
- Did we do all that a reasonable person would deem appropriate to avoid accidents (or afterwards – did we do everything that reasonable people would have done to avoid this accident)?

More often than not, when fraternities and sororities sponsor or participate in, co-sponsor or attend events with underage drinking, and events with multiple sponsors, the answers to these two questions are incriminating.



WHY BYOB?

If you are going to host an event, there are three main methods that can be used to reduce risk. They are substance free events, third party vendor / catered events or BYOB events. Any accidents that occur at a substance free event are covered by your general liability policy in most cases. Events held at a third party vendor are suggested as reduced risk events because they partially transfer liability and risk away from your organization and to the vendor.

In the case of BYOB events, liability is partially transferred from the organization to the guest if appropriate guidelines are followed. This reduces your risk as an organization and as an officer. If the chapter does not provide, sell, or distribute alcohol; then the individuals bringing and consuming their own alcohol assume a great deal of the risk for their choices. In addition to policy violations that may involve probation or significant intervention by the host institution and/or the national organization, an event at which a chapter or individuals provide alcohol to members or guests places the organization and anyone involved with the organization at very high risk.

If BYOB events represent a change for your chapter or community, this change may be met with resistance. It is the responsibility of those who understand the concept to educate those who do not. The following questions are typical of those you may receive and are designed to assist you in responding to the most common questions related to the management of BYOB events.

BYOB FAQs

BYOB is way too complicated.	Not really. In fact, once you understand the concept, BYOB events are easier to administer. This booklet explains and outlines proper BYOB events in clear and simple terms.
Other chapters will cheat.	Maybe so. But you should be more interested in the safety of your brothers and sisters and the continued existence of your chapter. Your governing bodies will have enforcement mechanisms in place to deal with policy violations. Don't let your distrust of other chapters dictate your policy.
It will be more expensive.	Actually it will be less expensive for you personally. Although cans are more expensive, each individual of legal drinking age will be buying for himself or herself. So, you pay only for the amount you choose to drink... with BYOB, you do not pay for those who consume way more than their fair share.
BYOB will affect our recruitment.	Prove it. It is already a standard of every NIC member organization that alcohol should not be present for any recruitment or new member activity. Greeks are already tarnished by negative stereotypes related to alcohol, and there is no place for alcohol to be part of any values based recruitment process.
It is more convenient for the men to buy the alcohol.	More convenient for whom? Members of all chapters sponsoring or participating in an event need to share the social responsibility. If someone chooses to drink, and can legally buy alcohol, it should be up to that person to do so. Convenience quickly gives way to liability if someone is injured or dies and it can be shown that the chapter or individuals provided alcohol, especially to those under the legal drinking age.
Brothers will stock up hard liquor in their rooms.	Yes, some members may, as some already do. The chapter should follow existing guidelines for the presence of hard alcohol and room parties during social events. If there are no appropriate guidelines in place, the chapter should establish guidelines. If members break the rules, the chapter standards board should become involved. Someone can always break a rule, but do not let that stop you from implementing a BYOB policy.
Why do we need invitations and an invitation guest list?	Why would you want to have an event with people you do not know? A sure way to ruin an event is to have the wrong people attend. You all know who the wrong people are. Those who destroy your property and exhibit other forms of inappropriate or aggressive behavior. No one likes the destruction of the chapter house that can result from poorly managed social events. Avoid this by only inviting the right people that respect you organization and chapter house and by only admitting those that have an invitation.



A BYOB CHECKLIST

The BYOB guidelines provided throughout this resource guide are suggestions for safe and practical implementation. Individual chapters must still follow their inter/national as well as institutional policies, if said policies are more specific and / or more stringent. If questions arise, this checklist does not supersede any local, city, state, university, general fraternity / sorority or national laws, statutes and polices, or common sense. These guidelines are designed to help you implement a BYOB event.

Theme

- All event themes should use common sense and be appropriate.
- Event themes should not be disrespectful or degrading to any person or population.
- The use of inappropriate event themes has significantly affected the perceptions and stereotypes of fraternity life in recent years.

Entrance

- One well lit entrance, controlled and monitored by security or older members. The preferred method is security that is contracted, licensed, and bonded.
- Monitors check to see if those seeking entry are members or have an invitation and are on the guest list.
- IDs are checked by older, initiated members, not new members.
- Members and guests with alcohol are required to show proof of legal drinking age (the invitation guest list should also have the birthdays of members and guests). A picture ID with a birth date should be required.
- A guest's name is checked once they have entered the event.
- Several exits must be available due to fire codes and laws; however, exits can not be used as entrances.

Invitation Guest Lists

- Invitation guest lists with specific names and birthdays of all members and invited guests should be generated for each function.
- The student or Greek directory is not an acceptable guest list. Invitations should be issued to the guest(s) that a member wishes to invite to the event.
- Invitation guest lists should be made 24 hours prior to the event. After this time, no substitutions or add-ons are permitted. A ratio of two – three guests per member is suggested.

Wristbands

- Members and guests who are of legal drinking age and bring alcohol to the event should receive a non-adjustable, event specific wristband (carnival / amusement park type is recommended).
- The individuals name is checked off the invitation guest list and the type of alcohol brought is written by his/her name.
- Members and guests who are not of legal drinking age or do not bring alcohol do not receive a wristband, but do receive a chapter specific hand stamp after checking in.
- Members and guests without a wristband should not be consuming alcohol.

Punch Cards

- For each and every event, punch cards should be created that are event specific.
- Punch cards should be about credit card size with the following information: name, birthday, type of alcohol / amount brought, date of event, location to punch up to six holes for consume alcohol.
- Punch cards, unlike tickets are easy to handle and are a more effective means for proper distribution.
- Punch cards are to be collected at the exits when guests leave the event.



Types and amounts of alcohol

- The following stipulations apply per person for a typical four to five hour function:
Maximum of six (6), twelve (12) ounce cans / plastic bottles of beer / wine coolers / malt beverages.
- No glass bottles.
- No cases, twelve-packs, or other alcohol containers larger than six 12 oz beers or wine coolers
- No squeeze bottles, water bottles, beer bongs, party balls, pitchers, tumblers, or other containers.
- No kegs or hard alcohol.
- No alcohol for common use in member's rooms.
- No shots, drinking games, or other activities that encourage inappropriate drinking behaviors.

Food and non-alcoholic beverages

- The chapter should provide an amount of non-alcoholic beverages at least equal to the total number of people in attendance at the event.
- Breads, meats, cheeses, vegetables, cookies, subs, pizza, brownies, fruits and dips are considered appropriate foods. The chapters should avoid salty foods.
- All food and non-alcoholic beverages should be free to all attendees.
- Food and non-alcoholic beverages should be contained within one centralized location.
- Non-alcoholic beverages should be served from closed containers.
- During the last 45 minutes of an event, alcohol service should stop; a new non-alcoholic beverage and food item should be served for those who wish to switch beverages and begin winding down.

Chapter Monitors and Security

- Monitors are charged with regulating social events and maintaining the risk management policy of the chapter(s) involved.
- Monitors are not to consume alcohol for a reasonable amount of time prior to and during the social event.
- One monitor for every 10-15 attendees is advised.
- If the event is co-sponsored between a fraternity and sorority, both male and female monitors must be used to ensure the safety of all guests and that all applicable rules are applied to men and women equally.
- Monitors should be older members of all participating organizations who will serve as general monitors or service monitors working at the service distribution center. New members should not be serving as monitors.
- Specialty clothing may be worn by the monitors to set them apart from the rest of the attendees
- Chapter presidents and social chairs should limit their use of alcohol (if consuming at all) during social events so that they can, along with the monitors, ensure that a safe social environment is maintained.
- Monitors have the right to deny access to the event to anyone they think is already impaired by alcohol or other drugs, even if the person is on the invitation guest list.

Service Distribution Center

- One centralized location should be established for the distribution of all alcoholic beverages.
- No other location, especially members' rooms, can be used for the distribution of alcoholic beverages.
- The holding tank, which serves as a cooling area for the alcohol brought to the function by members and guests, is as simple as a large rubber trash can filled with ice.
- Anyone who wishes to acquire an alcoholic beverage that he/she brought to the event must present the punch card, show their wristband, and return an empty can if this is not the first request (returning the cans assists the chapter with its recycling efforts and helps ensure that alcohol is not being given away to others once it leaves the service center).
- The service monitors must not serve anyone who is intoxicated, even if the person has alcohol remaining.
- Only one alcoholic beverage may be acquired at a time.
- Left-over alcohol can be picked up the following day. Otherwise, it is to be discarded.