

Planning Special Events, Concerts or Festivals

Is your organization planning a special event, concert or festival where alcohol will be sold or served? The following is a guide to assist you, the Event Organizer, in preparing for and executing a successful event.

EVENT PARTNERS

Your Event Partners should be part of the event planning and kept fully informed, as they will be involved in approving the plans for your event. The Event Partners should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Local Police Service
- Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO)
- Fire Service
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Health Department
- Municipality, including Bylaw Enforcement
- Landlord or entity in control of the event site
- Special Occasion Permit (SOP) Holder or Caterer (Liquor Sales Licensee)

KNOW YOUR REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARE AN OPERATIONAL (“OPS”) PLAN

Everyone involved, including all the Event Partners, needs to have a clear understanding of how the event will unfold. As the Event Organizer, you need to research and plan all requirements to ensure the event unfolds smoothly. You must also be aware of the laws respecting Catered Events vs. Special Occasion Permits.

In preparation, you should develop an operational - or Ops - plan. You will need enough copies of the plan, including any site maps and diagrams, to provide at least one copy to all Event Partners. Once the plan has been approved by the Event Partners, the event can move forward.

Introduction

This section of the Ops plan should include a brief description of your event.

- **Who** will be attending and in what numbers?
- **What** is the attraction?
- **Where** is it located?
- **When** is it occurring?
- **Why** is it important to the area?



Business Details

Describe the business structure of the event. For example: “ABC Entertainment Group is the event organizer, Don’s Event Park is the Landlord, and Great Events is the Caterer/SOP Holder.” You should include contact information for each participant in the event (names, address, phone number, cell number and email address).

Site Maps / Diagrams

Your site map should be of professional quality and indicate the dimensions of the overall site, including licensed areas and serving areas. If guests will be permitted to carry alcohol through the event area, please show where all the fencing will be positioned and the security arrangements you have made to keep the alcohol in the event area. The map should also show any street closures.

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Dates and Hours of Operation

The plan must state the dates of the event, times when the doors/gates will open, event loads (how many people you expect to arrive at once), when alcohol will be sold and served (i.e. bar service hours from 11 am – 2 am) and how many people will be staffing each alcohol service area at what times. State the band set times and/or other milestones during your event. State your “bad weather” plan, such as a change of location or date.

Communications

State specifically how all parties will communicate during the event (portable radios, headsets, cell phones, etc.).

Food Service

What food will be available at your event? Is the food being prepared on-site or being delivered? Ensure that your food arrangements, whether prepared on-site or delivered, comply with local health authority requirements. Remember that food must be available whenever alcohol is being sold or served.

EMS and Fire Services

Include details if EMS and Fire Services will be servicing the event, including their schedule and what services will be on site (i.e. 1 Ambulance, 4 Paramedics, 6 First-Aiders and a tented infirmary, or 1 Rescue truck, 4 Fire Fighters). If you do not plan to have EMS or Fire Services on site, please specify how you will contact them in case of emergency, including telephone numbers.

Event Location

Where will the event be held? Has the landlord consented to alcohol at the event? Has the landlord, particularly a municipality, imposed any additional requirements for the event? If so, include a list of those requirements, or a copy of the local Municipal Alcohol Policy, if applicable.

Security

When planning security for your event, employ a risk-based strategy: the higher the risk to public safety, the more security measures should be put in place. The numbers of Staff, Security and Police will be based on, but not limited to, the following:



- The nature of the event and the sponsor;
- The age range of the people that your event will appeal to;
- The location of the event;
- The dates and hours of the event;
- The number of people expected to attend;
- The size of the area where patrons will be allowed to drink alcohol;
- Whether there is any tiered seating in the area where patrons can take alcohol;
- The types of alcoholic beverages (beer, wine and/or spirits) and non-alcoholic beverages you are going to sell or serve;
- The portion sizes, container types (plastic cups, cans or bottles) and the price per serving;
- Any limits on the number of alcoholic drinks that a patron can purchase;
- Whether minors will be permitted in the licensed area(s); and
- How people will get into and out of the event (i.e. traffic and patrol plans).

In your Ops plan, include the number and schedule for all event staff, including Private Security and Paid Duty Police. Include details of their duties. Where will your security be stationed and will they be able to see clearly? How will security communicate with each other? How will other staff members communicate with security? Include what behaviour

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will and will not be tolerated, and when and how personnel will escort patrons out, including removing wristbands from ejected patrons, etc. Ensure you will have adequate security when the event ends.

Portable Washrooms

Ensure sufficient numbers are rented, including handicapped facilities. Pump-out and clean washrooms during the event. Maintain supplies such as toilet paper, hand sanitizer, soap and water at each station.

Portable Structures

Will structures such as tents, stage, etc., be set up at the event? If so, include the details for installation. The local Municipality must issue permits and inspect these structures.

Capacity

The area capacity must be set by either Building or Fire Services and clearly posted in the licensed area. Include your seating plan. Will there be tables and chairs, picnic tables or will patrons be standing? Will you use any tiered seating?

Fencing

The same criteria for determining your security requirements will also determine your fencing needs. Fencing is an item that will be discussed and decided by the Event Partners, and each party has needs to be considered and consulted.

The following are best practices:

- Low Risk – minimum allowable is 36” or portable 4’ modular fencing
- Medium Risk – single or double 4’ modular fencing; if double, include a 10’ “no-go zone” between fences
- High Risk – double 6’ or 8’ modular fence with a 10’ moat between fences

The fencing must be secured at its connections and anchored to the ground with 3’ rebar where necessary (for example, the front line at a concert). Keep lighting and cords away from patrons. One entrance and one exit will simplify counting patrons. The entrance and exits must allow for patron movements and a waiting line. Fire Services will assist with size and number of breaks in fencing. For indoor events, clearly-defined outdoor smoking areas should be identified.

Signage

Consider using easy-to-read black and white signs identifying the following:

- “Beer Garden”, should you choose those words
- “Ticket Sales - Refunds”
- “Enter” and “Exit”
- “Washrooms”
- Menu items
- Bag search, if applicable
- First Aid Station
- Age of Majority, if applicable
- “No Re-entry”, if applicable
- Wheelchair accessible areas

Lighting

Include a description of the lighting for your event. Ensure that event personnel such as ticket sellers, bartenders, entrance and exit staff, etc. all have adequate lighting. Keep lighting and cords away from patrons. Anchor to the ground with 3’ re-bar where necessary (such as front line at a concert). If possible, do a trial the night before the event.

Camping

If on-site overnight camping is available, note this and be prepared to discuss how this will operate in detail with the Event Partners.



Timelines

A well-planned, working timeline is strongly suggested to keep event planning and approvals on track. A “no changes” date must be agreed upon by all Event Partners. Resource and Collective Agreement commitments need to be honoured.

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CHUTE-STYLE BAR SET-UP

OPS PLAN SECTIONS RELATED TO THE SALE AND SERVICE OF ALCOHOL

Entrances and exits of licensed area(s)

Include details and drawings for the entrance and exit of the licensed area. State the responsibilities of the door security (i.e. checking identification and monitoring for signs of intoxication). Will bags/chairs be allowed in?

Bar details

Include details for the bar(s) set-up, number of bartenders, and bartender responsibilities and training. A chute style bar set-up is recommended for large events. Include detailed



responsibilities for floor staff. How will the licensed area be maintained, cleaned, and garbage cans emptied?

Minors

If minors are permitted in your licensed areas, include detailed plans for how you will keep them from consuming alcohol. This must be discussed and negotiated with the Event Partners. Identify where ID check locations will be located. The minimum best practice is using pink wristbands on persons 19 years of age or older (“Pink you drink”). These are placed snugly on patrons by security personnel, preventing removal and use by another person. Consider using different colours each day for multiple day events. If large lines are anticipated, consider using two lanes to enter the licensed area: one lane for patrons that are clearly of legal drinking age, and a second lane to check the ID of younger looking patrons.

Alcohol Ticket Sales and Refunds

Your ops plan should include details for ticket sales, such as prices, maximum number of tickets that will be sold at one time (i.e. 4 tickets sold, 2 drinks served at one time), etc. Consider portion sizes such as 341ml vs. 500ml. Refunds for drink tickets should be available while the bar is open and 30 minutes after closing.