

Alcohol Sales at Public Events

Alcohol Sales at Public Events in Santa Fe

Alcohol abuse and dependence and excessive drinking pose significant risks to public health and safety for adults and youth in New Mexico. Since 1997, New Mexico has had the highest death rate due to alcohol in the United States. Amongst working age adults ages 20-64, alcohol is the leading cause of death, with 1 in 6 deaths caused by alcohol.¹ Underage drinking is a serious concern, with 22% of high school students reporting they had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 13, the fourth highest rate in the nation.² Excessive drinking also places a huge economic burden on our community. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that the economic cost of alcohol in New Mexico is \$1.9 billion, a per capita cost of \$960, the third highest in the nation.³

Restricting alcohol sales on public property in order to reduce alcohol-related harms has been recommended as an evidence-based strategy to reducing underage drinking and other alcohol-related harms⁴. In 2009, in response to concerns about the impact of alcohol abuse and a desire to support a healthy, vibrant community, the City of Santa Fe adopted restrictions on the sale and consumption of alcohol on city property. These restrictions prohibited the sale of alcohol at most city-owned property.

Since the ordinance was adopted, there have been only a few requests to sell alcohol on city property. In 2012, the City adopted an ordinance that established regulations for events that have received authorization for alcohol sales. These regulations are based on best practices for alcohol sales and service to promote public safety and health.

The Link Between Alcohol Sales at Public Events and Public Health

Research over the past two decades has shown clear linkages between the sale of alcohol at public events and these public health harms⁵:

- Underage drinking and sales to minors
- Binge drinking by adults
- DWI
- Violence, fighting and public disturbances
- Property damage and vandalism
- Liability exposure of host for alcohol-related injuries and property damage
- Reinforces the norm that alcohol is required for a celebration



When to Keep an Event Alcohol-Free

- When the event is on public property, such as a park or athletic field
- When the event is open to children and youth under the age of 21
- When the event honors or celebrates someone or a group under the age of 21
- When the event has had a history of excessive drinking and alcohol-related harms

What is Excessive Drinking⁶?

- Any alcohol use by those under the minimum legal drinking age of 21
- Binge drinking (4 or more drinks by women; 5 or more drinks for men on one occasion)
- Heavy drinking (8 or more drinks per week for women; 15 or more for men)
- Any alcohol use by pregnant women

Recommendations for Restricting Alcohol Sales at Public Events

Support Alcohol-Free Events

If the event is held on public property and open to all ages, including children and youth, the best practice is to ban the sale and service of alcohol.

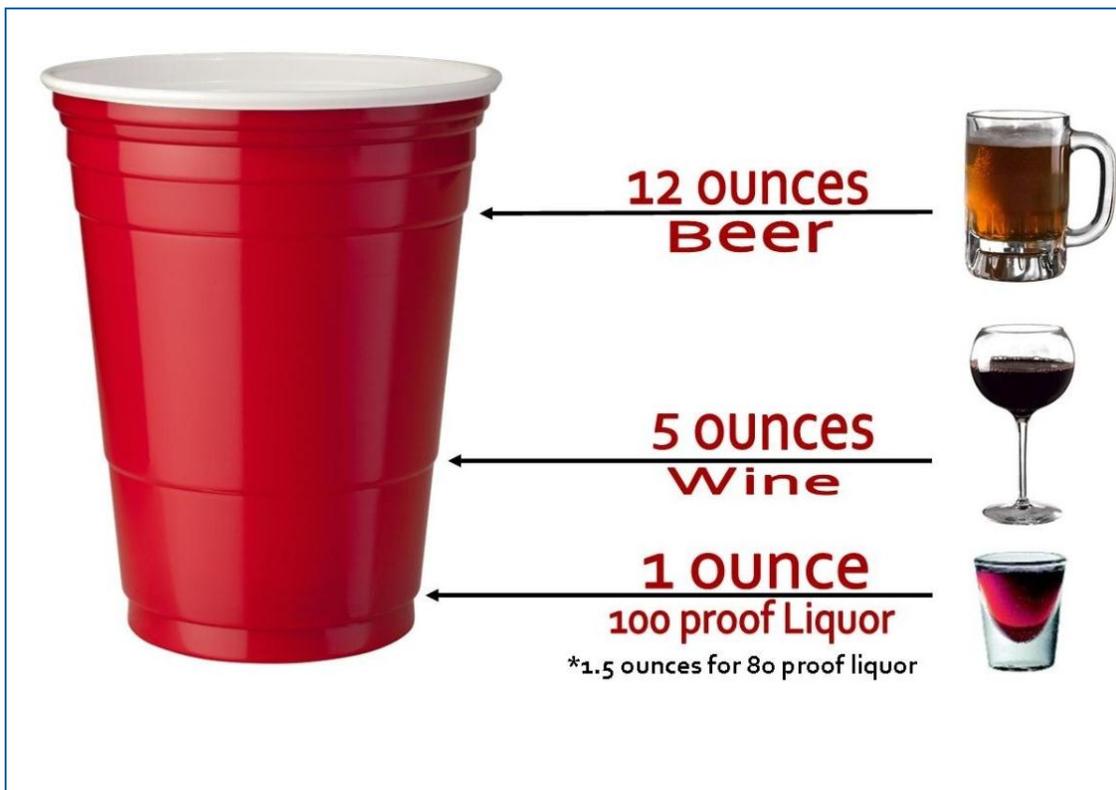
Follow Best Practices When Alcohol Sales or Service is Allowed:

1. Follow all laws
2. Limit the number of drinks that can be purchased to reduce risk of binge drinking
3. Designate an area for sales and consumption
4. Provide security to reduce risk of harm
5. Take steps to reduce risk of DWI following the event

When Alcohol Sales are Permitted, Follow Best Practices

- Obtain the appropriate license needed to conduct legal alcohol sales and/or service
- Follow all liquor laws, including no sales to minors and intoxicated persons
- Limit the number of servings to one at a time and limit the total number of servings per person to no more than 3 “standard drinks,” tracking alcohol purchases
- Serve only beer and wine; no distilled spirits, so the amount of alcohol can be controlled
- Provide water free of charge and serve food and alcohol-free drinks in addition to alcohol
- Designate a special area for of-age participants to purchase and consume alcohol, installing fencing to establish a perimeter if needed and ensure that the alcohol remains within the designated area and cannot be consumed or taken outside of that area
- Require identification to be checked before entering the designated area
- Identify legal drinkers with a non-transferable wristband
- Provide appropriate security measures
- Use aluminum, plastic or paper containers; no glass
- End sales or service of alcohol at least one hour prior to the end of the event

What is One Standard Drink⁷?



Examples of One Standard Drink

The following are generally considered the equivalent of one standard drink:

12 oz. of beer or wine cooler (4-5% alcohol)

8 oz. of malt liquor or craft beer (7-8%)

5 oz. of table wine (12%)

3-4 oz. of fortified wine (sherry or port) (15%)

2-3 oz. of liqueur, cordial or aperitif (30%)

1.5 oz. of brandy (40%)

1.5 oz. of spirits such as whiskey, gin, vodka, etc. (40% or 80 proof)

References

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p0626-excessive-drinking.html>
2. <http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline>
3. <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p0626-excessive-drinking.html>
4. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/policies/restrict-alcohol-availability-public-events-and-public-property>; http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_briefs/2007/RAND_RB9262.pdf
5. Toomey, T., Erickson, D., Patrek, W., Fletcher, L and, Wagenaar, A (2005) Illegal alcohol sales and use of alcohol control policies at community festivals. Public Health Reports, 120(2), 165-173; <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/papers2009/bosma.htm>
6. <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/moderate-binge-drinking>
7. <http://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/tools/calculators/drink-size-calculator.aspx>

Date of Publication: July 20, 2015