

# **Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh Alcohol Policy**

The Episcopal Church considered the appropriate role of alcohol in our shared life together at the 78th General Convention. The following resolution represents the recommended policy for consideration. We intend to follow these policies at all diocesan events, and strongly recommend each congregation consider adopting these as they form their own alcohol policy.

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention acknowledge The Episcopal Church's long-standing tolerance for the use of alcohol which, in some cases, has contributed to its misuse, and has undermined a climate of wholeness and holiness for all; that our Church culture too often avoids hard conversations about alcohol use, and the role of forgiveness and compassion in healing and recovery; and that The Episcopal Church now commits to create a new normal in our relationship with alcohol. We aspire to be a place in which conversations about alcohol, substance misuse, or addiction are not simply about treatment but about renewal, justice, wholeness, and healing. We affirm that Recovery Ministries of The Episcopal Church has long been and continues to be a valuable resource for this work; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th Convention adopt the following policy on alcohol and other substance misuse and encourage dioceses, congregations, seminaries, schools, young adult ministries, and affiliated institutions to update their policies on the use of alcohol and other substances with the potential for misuse. These policies should consider the following:

1. The Church must provide a safe and welcoming environment for all people, including people in recovery.
2. All applicable federal, state, and local laws should be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors.
3. Some dioceses and congregations may decide not to serve alcohol at events or gatherings. Others may decide to permit a limited use of alcoholic beverages at church-sponsored events. Both can be appropriate if approached mindfully.
4. When alcohol is served, it must be monitored and those showing signs of intoxication must not be served. Whenever alcohol is served, the rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge must appoint an adult to oversee its serving. That adult must not drink alcoholic beverages during the time of his or her execution of his or her responsibilities. If hard liquor is served, a certified server is required.
5. Serving alcoholic beverages at congregational events where minors are present is strongly discouraged. If minors are present, alcohol must be served at a separate station that is monitored at all times to prevent underage drinking.

6. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages must be clearly labeled as such. Food prepared with alcohol does not need to be labeled provided the alcohol is completely evaporated by the cooking process; however, it is recommended that even in this case the use of alcohol in cooking be noted on a label.
7. Whenever alcohol is served, appealing non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal prominence and accessibility.
8. The serving of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as an attraction of the event, e.g. “wine and cheese reception,” “cocktail party,” and “beer and wine tasting.”
9. Ministries inside or outside of congregations will make certain that alcohol consumption is not the focus of the ministry, and that drinking alcohol is not an exclusively normative activity.
10. Food must be served when alcohol is present.
11. The groups or organizations sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the clergy or the vestry. Such groups or organizations must also assume responsibility for those persons who might become intoxicated and must provide alternative transportation for anyone whose capacity to drive may be impaired. Consulting with liability insurance carriers is advised.
12. Recognizing the effects of alcohol as a mood-altering drug, alcoholic beverages shall not be served when the business of the Church is being conducted.
13. Clergy shall consecrate an appropriate amount of wine when celebrating the Eucharist and perform ablutions in a way that does not foster or model misuse.
14. We encourage clergy to acknowledge the efficacy of receiving the sacrament in one kind and consider providing non-alcoholic wine.

The following page is a Tip Sheet from Church Insurance.

Adopted....December 2024



## Risk Management Tip Sheet

# Liquor Liability at Church Events

- Avoid serving alcohol to anyone under the age of 21 by checking identification.
- Do not serve someone who appears to be inebriated.
- Institute a drink limit.
- Make sure non-alcoholic beverages are available.
- Limit events to within a certain time frame.
- When an outside party uses your premises (such as a wedding), you may require a certificate of insurance from the vendor.
- Check licensing requirements and determine if your organization is required to secure a liquor license.
- Consider the use of a professional bartender and the requirement that they provide a certificate of insurance showing coverage for liquor liability.
- Make designated drivers available to anyone who appears inebriated.

### Understanding your policy and what's covered:

- The Church Insurance Companies<sup>1</sup> does not pay for bodily injury, personal injury or advertising injury for which any insured may be held liable by reason of:
  - a. causing or contributing to the intoxication of a person;
  - b. the furnishing of alcoholic beverages to a person under the influence of alcohol or under the legal drinking age; or
  - c. a law or regulation relating to the sale, gift distribution, selling or serving alcoholic beverages.
- This exclusion applies if you are in the business of manufacturing, distributing, selling or serving alcoholic beverages.