

# House policies

## A fact sheet for licensees

### What is a house policy?

A house policy is a document containing general information on the manner in which the business is operated. It should broadly outline your business philosophy and what you intend to achieve in relation to atmosphere, entertainment, patron enjoyment and customer service.

The creation and adoption of a house policy is an excellent strategy to encourage responsible service of alcohol practices from staff. By displaying some of the more significant points in your policy you can also make a clear statement to patrons about how your business is run and what type of behaviour will and will not be tolerated.

A house policy provides staff with a 'code of practice' and broadly outlines what is acceptable and unacceptable at an establishment. In depth detail about staff duties should still be found in your procedures manual.

### What could the house policy contain?

Some examples of what you may like to include in your house policy are:

- Your business philosophy.
- What is expected of staff in relation to responsible service of alcohol.
- Your commitment to patrons in providing an enjoyable and safe environment.
- Management's commitment to staff training and improvement.
- A commitment of staff and management to customer service in a friendly, responsible and professional manner.
- How minors and intoxicated patrons will be dealt with and when security/police will be involved.
- Assistance offered to patrons – advice on low and non-alcoholic drinks – perhaps offer food, water, coffee or call a taxi if a patron is becoming intoxicated.
- A policy to record the incidents of refusal of service, details of problem patrons etc.

- The role of security – who will be refused entry and broadly, the manner in which patrons are to be treated.
- A commitment to provide low or non-alcoholic alternative drinks, such as juices, coffees, mocktails.
- An emergency plan for a medical incident.
- A commitment to promoting your business responsibly.

Many more topics could be covered. Remember, your house policy should broadly discuss your chosen topic areas. Specific on-the-job details are contained in job procedures manuals.

### How to ensure staff commitment

The house policy is not another procedures manual. It is a broad collection of statements of how your business will be operated. To ensure staff commitment to your vision, make it their vision too!

Get staff involved in suggesting and discussing what your business commitment will be and how you are all going to achieve this. This way you will all have the same objective. Make sure you keep reinforcing the message at regular staff meetings. Here's a suggestion as to how the process might work.

#### 1. Assemble staff

Explain the benefits of a house policy for the establishment (clarify staff; the provision of a safe environment; compliance with the law; better trained staff, etc.)

#### 2. Brainstorm

Have an open discussion, inviting ideas as to what the house policy could contain.

When you have a number of ideas on board, divide the staff into groups.

Allocate each group one of the agreed objectives and ask them to discuss how this could be achieved. Topics may include: How can we ensure a safe environment? (consider staff, patrons, security, trading hours and parking) What kind of training is needed to achieve the house policy? What should staff do in dealing with minors and intoxicated persons?

When each of the issues has been addressed and procedures to support the policy developed, reconvene to discuss and finalise your proposed house policy. Remember, the house policy should not be a lengthy document – it is a summary of the key points you have discussed and agreed upon. However, you may also wish to review your procedures manual after completing these discussions.

Discuss how the house policy will be useful and how it can be promoted and adopted.

### 3. Launch the policy with staff and patrons.

To ensure your house policy is put into action, it is crucial to ensure that:

- staff and management are involved in its formulation
- the house policy is readily accessible for reference purposes
- each staff member has a copy
- it is a major element of your in-house training and induction programs for both permanent and casual staff.

### **Promotion of your house policy to patrons**

Once adopted, your house policy can be promoted to patrons as well as staff. This can be achieved by using a few key sentences explaining your business philosophy and your commitment to patrons. These can be taken directly from the house policy.

Have them listed as key points, printed up and displayed on the premises together with your other posters and signs.

Your house policy can be adapted in this fashion to clearly articulate your commitment to patrons in terms of service and facilities as well as indicating what will not be tolerated and how patrons will be dealt with.

### **For more information please contact:**

The Liquor Licensing Division  
Web site: [www.liquor.qld.gov.au](http://www.liquor.qld.gov.au)  
or call 1300 658 030 (for the cost of a local call).

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