

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
ON CHURCH PROPERTY

Revised and Adopted by Diocesan Council, October 8, 2015

It is the responsibility of each parish vestry, Bishop's Committee or similar governing body to establish a policy for the use, service, sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages at functions taking place on church property, whether or not sponsored by members of the parish or any parish organization. This policy shall be made known to all members of the parish and to any groups in the community that may use parish facilities.

Each parish policy is subject to compliance with (i) all laws of the United States and the State of New York, specifically those relating to the use, service, sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages; (ii) Resolution A158 as adopted by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, July 2015; and (iii) these Guidelines. Any parish is at liberty to establish a policy more restrictive than any of the aforesaid but may not establish any policy that is less restrictive.

The following guidelines shall govern the use, service, sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages on church property:

1. Any event at which alcoholic beverages are to be served must have the approval of the clergyperson in charge of the parish. No alcoholic beverages shall be served during any meeting at which the business of the Church is conducted (e.g., vestry meetings).
2. The availability of alcoholic beverages must not be the "focal point" of any event or advertising for such event. Terms such as "cocktail party", "wine and cheese party", "beer and wine tasting" are to be avoided. This pertains to all events, whether parish sponsored or not.
3. Each parish contemplating sponsoring or providing space for a function at which alcoholic beverages are to be served should consult their insurance policy/carrier to ascertain that appropriate insurance coverage is in place. If an external organization is sponsoring the function, the parish should obtain a copy of such organization's insurance policy to ascertain that the parish is an "additional insured" under such policy and that such policy has appropriate coverage.
4. Non-alcoholic beverages (e.g., bottled water, soda, fruit juice) must be available at all such functions. If alcoholic beverages are to be sold, non-alcoholic beverages must be provided at no cost or at a lower cost than the cost of alcoholic beverages. The availability of such non-alcoholic beverages shall be prominently displayed and shall be equally accessible to patrons. Serving areas for alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages shall be separate.
5. If alcoholic beverages are served at any function, all beverages being served should be clearly identified as alcoholic or non-alcoholic.
6. Food should always be served at any function where alcoholic beverages are provided. Any food containing alcoholic beverages as an ingredient should be clearly labeled as such.

7. Any alcoholic beverage must be served by a person over the age of 21 appointed by the clergy person in charge of the parish. Such person must not consume alcoholic beverages during the duration of the event at which he/she is serving.

8. Specific times for the service of alcoholic beverages must be established (e.g., no “open bar”).
UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES BE SERVED TO (i) ANY PERSON UNDER THE AGE OF 21; or (ii) TO ANY PERSON WHO APPEARS TO BE INTOXICATED OR IMPAIRED.

9. If alcoholic beverages are to be sold, there must be compliance with New York laws requiring the obtaining of a special permit from the New York State Liquor Authority. It should be noted that each parish is limited to four (4) such permits during any twelve (12) month period. Such permits are limited to the sale of beer and wine, which must be obtained from a licensed wholesaler, brewery or winery (i.e., not purchased from a retail liquor store or grocery). Such permits do NOT permit the sale/service of “hard liquor” (e.g., scotch, gin, bourbon). If it is desired to provide for sale/service of these items, the parish/organization MUST engage the services of a licensed caterer who holds an appropriate license issued by the New York State Liquor Authority.

10. If a parish function has an “admission price”, “ticket price” or “donation” connected with attendance (herein called a “charge”), such charge may not vary depending on whether an individual attendee receives an alcoholic beverage (e.g., \$10 charge without access to alcohol, \$15 charge with access). Such a function may not have a “per drink” bar as an alternative nor may any alcoholic beverages other than beer or wine be served (see item 9 above).

11. The sponsoring group for any event at which alcoholic beverages are to be served shall be responsible for arranging for transportation for any person who appears to be intoxicated or whose ability to drive or otherwise return home may be impaired.

In connection with this policy, each parish shall establish, in appropriate forums (i) church school curriculum time for education regarding alcohol and substance abuse; (ii) literature about issues relating to alcohol and substance abuse; and (iii) information about referrals to programs for treatment of alcohol and substance abuse.

For purposes of this policy, the term “parish” shall refer to any individual church, religious community, worshipping community or any other group, however denominated, under the auspices of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island.

