

Event Planning Guidelines

The event planning guidelines provided throughout this resource guide are suggestions for safe and practical implementation and execution of your social event. Many of the items listed in this document are prevention strategies that can contribute to a well-managed event. Individual chapters must follow all Sigma Delta Tau policies as well as institutional policies, if said policies are more specific and/or more stringent. If questions arise, these guidelines do not supersede any local, city, state, university, general sorority or national laws, statutes and polices, or common sense.

NOTE: *At its basic function, if members and guests bring their own beverage and consume their own beverage, your chapter has implemented a BYOB event.*

Theme

Event themes should NOT be disrespectful or degrading to any person or population. When selecting a theme, ensure it:

- Does NOT rely on the stereotypes of certain groups.
- Does NOT encourage offensive dress or costumes.
- Does NOT stereotype men or women.
- Is NOT sexist. If you're unsure, try interchanging the word/theme with a racial word/theme.
- Is NOT centered on making fun of a particular group of people, culture, or organization.
- Does NOT lend itself to members, associate members, or guests taking the theme to a place that is disrespectful or degrading.

Entrance

Each event should have one well-lit entrance, controlled and monitored by security or older members. We recommend professional security that is contracted, licensed, and bonded.

- Monitors should check to see if those seeking entry are on the guest list.
- If professional security is unavailable, IDs should be checked by older, initiated members, not new members.
- Members and guests with alcohol should show proof of legal drinking age. A picture ID with a birth date should be required.
- A guest's name and arrival time should be indicated on the check-in list once they have entered the event.
- Several exits should be available due to fire codes and laws; however, exits cannot be used as entrances.
- When guests leave, their departure time should be indicated on the check-in list.



Invitation Guest Lists

Invitation guest lists with specific names and birthdays of all members and invited guests should be generated for each function.

- Only students from the host institution should be on the guest list.
- The student or Greek directory is not an acceptable guest list. Specific invitations should be issued to the guest(s) that a member wishes to invite to the event.
- Invitation guest lists should be finalized 24 hours prior to the event. After this time, no substitutions or add-ons are permitted.
- The guest-to-member ratio should not exceed 3:1. You should also take into account the fire code capacity for the venue for maximum number of guests permitted.
- Invitations should have specific start/end times.
- Guests who are already impaired should not be allowed into the event.
- Guests who have caused problems in the past should not be put on future guest lists.

Wristbands

Wristbands should always be used whenever alcohol is present at an event to distinguish between those who are and are not of legal drinking age.

FOR THIRD-PARTY VENDOR EVENTS

Members and guests who are of legal drinking age should receive a non-adjustable, event specific wristband (carnival/ amusement park type is recommended).

- The individual's name should be checked off the invitation guest list and the type of alcohol brought is written by his/her name.
- Members and guests who are not of legal drinking age should not receive a wristband, but should receive a chapter specific hand stamp after checking in.
- Members and guests without a wristband should not be consuming alcohol.

FOR BYOB EVENTS

Members and guests who are of legal drinking age **and bring alcohol to the event** should receive a non-adjustable, event specific wristband (carnival/ amusement park type is recommended).

- The individual's name should be checked off the invitation guest list and the type of alcohol brought is written by his/her name.
- Members and guests who are not of legal drinking age **or do not bring alcohol** should not receive a wristband, but should receive a chapter specific hand stamp after checking in.
- Members and guests without a wristband should not be consuming alcohol.



Punch Cards (BYOB Only)

For each and every BYOB event, punch cards should be created that are event specific.

- Punch cards should be about credit card size with the following information: name, birthday, type of alcohol / amount brought, date of event, location to punch up to six holes for redemption of alcohol.
- Punch cards, unlike tickets, are easy to handle and are a more effective means for proper distribution.
- Punch cards should be collected at the exits when guests leave the event.

Types and Amounts of Alcohol

The following stipulations should apply per person for a typical four-to-five-hour function:

FOR THIRD-PARTY VENDOR EVENTS

- Alcoholic beverages must be provided and sold on a per-drink basis by a licensed and insured third-party vendor; members cannot serve themselves.
- Alcoholic beverages cannot be purchased or provided by chapter funds.

FOR BYOB EVENTS

- Maximum of six (6), twelve (12) ounce cans/ plastic bottles of beer/ wine coolers/ malt beverages. No hard alcohol.
- No glass bottles.
- No cases, twelve-packs, or other alcohol containers larger than six 12 oz beers/wine coolers/malt beverages.
- No squeeze bottles, water bottles, beer bongs, party balls, pitchers, tumblers, or other containers.

Distribution of Alcohol

One centralized location should be established for the distribution of all alcoholic beverages.

- Common sources of alcohol, including bulk quantities, are prohibited.
- Shots, drinking games, or other activities that encourage inappropriate drinking behaviors should be prohibited.

FOR THIRD-PARTY VENDOR EVENTS

- Anyone who wishes to acquire an alcoholic beverage should present their ID and wristband to the designated third-party bartender.
- A cash bar should be utilized.
- Only one alcoholic beverage should be acquired at a time.
- The event monitors should prevent anyone who is intoxicated from being overserved.



FOR BYOB EVENTS

- The holding tank, which serves as a cooling area for the alcohol brought to the function by members and guests, can be as simple as a large rubber trash can filled with ice.
- Anyone who wishes to acquire an alcoholic beverage that they brought to the event should present the punch card, show their wristband, and return an empty can if this is not the first request (returning the cans assists the chapter with its recycling efforts and helps ensure that alcohol is not being given away to others once it leaves the service center).
- The service monitors should not serve anyone who is intoxicated, even if the person has alcohol remaining. We recommend service monitors be TIPS trained.
- Only one alcoholic beverage should be acquired at a time.
- Left-over alcohol should be discarded.

Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages

The chapter should provide food and non-alcoholic beverages in an amount at least equal to the total number of people in attendance at the event.

- Breads, meats, cheeses, vegetables, cookies, subs, pizza, brownies, fruits and dips are considered appropriate foods. The chapters should avoid salty foods.
- All food and non-alcoholic beverages should be free to all attendees.
- Food and non-alcoholic beverages should be contained within one centralized location.
- Non-alcoholic beverages should be served from closed containers.
- During the last 45 minutes of an event, alcohol service should stop; a new non-alcoholic beverage and food item should be served for those who wish to switch beverages and begin winding down.

Event Monitors and Security

Event monitors are charged with regulating social events and maintaining the risk management policy of the chapter(s) involved.

- Monitors should not consume alcohol for a reasonable amount of time prior to and during the social event.
- One monitor for every 15 attendees is recommended.
- If the event is co-sponsored between two or more organizations, members from all organizations should serve as event monitors in order to ensure the safety of all guests and that all applicable rules are applied to men and women equally (as applicable).
- Monitors should be older members of all participating organizations who will serve as general monitors or service monitors working the event, including but not limited to at the entrance/exits, at the service distribution center, and in the general event space.
- New members should not be serving as monitors.
- Specialty clothing may be worn by the monitors to set them apart from the rest of the attendees.
- Chapter Presidents and Executive Board officers should limit their use of alcohol (if consuming at all) during social events so that they can, along with the monitors, ensure that a safe social environment

is maintained.

- Monitors have the right to deny access to the event to anyone they think is already impaired by alcohol or other drugs, even if the person is on the invitation guest list.
- Access to private suites should be prohibited during the event.

Vendor Management

Chapters should verify that vendors have adequate insurance; additional insured certificates should be issued as needed.

- All contracts should be reviewed prior to signing and again prior to the event to ensure they meet Sigma Delta Tau policy.
- All contracts and records should be maintained from the event.

This resource has been adapted from resources provided by Holmes Murphy Fraternal Practice, the North-American Interfraternity Conference "BYOB Checklist," and the Pi Kappa Phi "Social Event Planning Guide."
For more information and resources, visit <https://www.holmesmurphy.com/groups/fraternal/>.

