

# safety matters

Restaurant  
Toolbox Talks for

From your safety partners at Gallagher Franchise Solutions

## Tips for Servers of Alcoholic Beverages

Our goal is to provide you with the right information and training to prevent patron intoxication and alcohol-impaired driving when you are serving alcoholic beverages. Assess how much a person has been drinking by recognizing the signs of intoxication and using the following methods for intervening with intoxicated guests.

### Signs of Intoxication

While alcohol affects everyone differently, the signs of intoxication generally include:

- Slurred or slowed speech
- Tendency to lose a train of thought
- Red eyes, inability to focus
- Decreased alertness
- Staggering or the inability to walk
- Fine motor skills are affected, such as the inability to light a cigarette
- Drinking faster than usual
- Being overly friendly

### How Much is Too Much?

To monitor how much a guest is drinking, the SMART (Server & Managers Alcohol Responsibility Training) program suggests using the traffic light system rather than counting how many drinks a guest has had. Here's how it works:

- **Green:** Patron shows no sign of impairment, is in a good mood, and is

not drinking rapidly. Guest gets a green light!

- **Yellow:** Patron is not yet intoxicated, may be drinking quickly, is either in a "down" mood or out to celebrate, and may be showing some signs of impairment. Your goal is to stop serving before a guest is intoxicated, so serve this guest with caution!
- **Red:** Patron is showing signs of intoxication, may be in a depressed, aggressive or bad mood, is drinking fast, and seems intent on becoming drunk. Stop! This guest should not be served alcohol.

### Dealing with Intoxicated Patrons

You have both the right and the duty to refuse service to an intoxicated patron. This puts you at risk, so keep the following in mind:

- Politely deny service. Offer food or alcohol-free alternatives.
- Tact and courtesy go a long way in preventing explosive situations.
- Avoid threatening statements, such as "You are drunk." Instead, put the focus on yourself. For example, "If I serve you another drink, I could lose my job."
- Offer to call a taxi or a friend for a ride.
- Be firm. Once you have refused service, do not bargain or back down.

**Learn to recognize the warning signs of intoxication. By practicing good judgment and common sense, you can help to keep our patrons safe.**

- Stay calm and remain in control. Move on to serving other customers or attend to other tasks to keep yourself busy.

If removal of a drunk patron becomes necessary, it should be done as quickly and with the least amount of force as possible. Using unreasonable force may result in injury and subsequent legal action. If there is the chance of a violent reaction from a patron, be prepared to call the police for assistance.

In the event of an incident, fill out a Liquor Liability Incident Form, which documents the measures taken to control an intoxicated person, and helps to defend liability in the event of an alcohol-related accident.

Intervening with an intoxicated patron may seem difficult, but your actions are critical. When you take the appropriate steps to prevent intoxicated patrons and alcohol-impaired driving, everyone benefits.