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MANAGING SAFETY IN BARS, PUBS AND CLUBS

Background

The use of glass in licensed premises is currently under close scrutiny with a growing number of police forces seeking to “coerce” licensees to use polycarbonate drinking vessels and plastic bottles. Premises refusing to co-operate have been threatened with review should a glassing incident occur, even though the use of plastic is not a mandatory condition on the licence.

The industry is not against using plastic where there is evidence to suggest this is needed but it is opposed to any blanket introduction of polycarbonates. This view is shared by Government as set out in the revised Alcohol Strategy “Safe. Sensible. Social” launched in June 2007. The Strategy states:

“The Government will support local action to secure the replacement of glassware and bottles with safer alternatives in individual high-risk premises.”

It goes on to say ... **“A pub or bar is not necessarily a high risk simply because it is in a town centre and open late, but neither is a premises low risk just because it is in the countryside and closes at 11pm. As well as location and operating hours, factors such as the type of venue, its customer make-up and the professionalism of its management can all have a bearing on whether a premises presents a risk of disorder and glass-related injury.”**

The Government has announced that an expert group, comprising police, doctors, academics and representatives of the alcohol industry, will be set up to gather further evidence of where targeted interventions might produce benefits and agree how high-risk premises can be best identified.

The expert group will be in place by Autumn 2007 and will be tasked with outlining the evidence base and proposals for further action in 2008.

Risk Assessment

In order to provide the industry with a standard approach to assessing the risk of violence in licensed premises the Association (in conjunction with BEDA) has prepared this guide which is based on existing good practice.

A very small minority of people may resort to violence in certain situations which can occur for any number of reasons. This guide seeks to identify significant factors which might trigger violence in any venue and sets out some of the preventative measures that can be taken to minimise the risk.

The risk assessment should be reviewed on a regular basis, particularly in the light of any incidents that do occur, and in any event to ensure that the assessment is kept up to date. The guide may also be used when preparing an operating schedule for a licence application or variation.

Venues should complete the section “**Assessing the Risk**” to identify the level of risk associated with the individual premises. There is a perception amongst enforcers that any venue in a town centre or high street will automatically attract a young and disorderly crowd of “vertical drinkers”. This section seeks to highlight the diversity of the trade and the wide range of hospitality offered by individual premises. Having completed this section the assessor is then required to indicate the “inherent” risk resulting from all the relevant factors.

In the “**Solutions**” section assessors are required to identify the measures that are already in place, together with any additional solutions which, in their opinion, might contribute further to a safer environment.

Finally, the “**Summary**” should record any further action deemed to be required to ensure the premises are managed as safely as possible. It is recognised that this process has already been undertaken in preparing a premises operating schedule but the importance of regular review should not be underestimated.

The risk assessment guide “Managing Safety in Bars, Pubs and Clubs” is available to order from the BBPA (order form attached) or can be downloaded from the Association’s website.

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If you have any queries relating to the above please contact Pamela Bates on 020 7627 9143 (pbates@beerandpub.com)