



**Catholic Diocese of Arlington
Policy on the Consumption of Alcohol and Diocesan Events**

Introduction

This policy provides guidelines and best practices for diocesan and parish-sponsored events, trainings, and meetings where alcoholic beverages may be present. Alcohol use is permitted, in moderation, by persons of legal drinking age with the expectation that all diocesan policies, state, local, and federal laws are followed.

Any event organized by a diocesan employee or parish representative in an official role is considered a diocesan event, regardless of the location. Therefore, all events are subject to this policy, regardless of where the event is being held. (This includes private venues and residences if the event is a diocesan event.)

Licensing Requirements

The Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (Va. ABC Board) stipulates the need for various licenses depending on the circumstances regarding the sale, location, number of attendees, and designation of the facility in which alcohol will be served. It is the responsibility of the designated staff member or volunteer to obtain sufficient knowledge of the Va. ABC Board's regulations and to ensure compliance. The two licenses that will apply most frequently to events are the [Banquet License](#) and the [Banquet Special Event License](#). Refer to the [Va. ABC Licensing Wizard](#) (<https://www.abc.virginia.gov/abcaca/public/wizard.jsp>) to assist you in determining if a license is needed for your event.

Responsible Use Requirements

This policy is intended to mitigate risk while encouraging the responsible and reasonable use of alcohol at events by adhering to the following guidance:

Age Restriction: The sale, availability, or distribution of alcoholic beverages to anyone under the age of 21 is strictly prohibited. When minors are present at an event, signs announcing the policy of not providing alcohol to anyone who is younger than 21 should be posted in a visible location.

Secure Access: Alcohol must be stored and dispensed from a controlled and monitored service area accessible only to designated bartenders. For large events, such as festivals, consider making an age controlled designated area (i.e., a "Beer Garden") for alcohol to be dispensed and consumed. All alcoholic beverages must be consumed within the area in which it is served. No containers, either open or closed, may leave the controlled and designated area.

Bartenders: A bartender is defined as a designated adult, over the age of 21, assigned to serve and monitor alcohol consumption during the event. The Commonwealth of Virginia does not require a bartender to be licensed. Best practices for bartenders to follow include:



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

- Verifying a customer's age by requesting proper ID and examining it carefully. If at any time they doubt the ID is valid or believe the customer is underage, they may deny them service.
- Being mindful of proper pouring so that each person receives a standard drink (i.e., 6 oz of wine, 12 oz of beer, etc.).
- Monitoring when someone may have consumed too much alcohol and be able to enforce a cut off with that individual using their best judgment. In general, a two-drink maximum should be observed.

Types of Alcohol: Beer and wine are the standard types of alcohol permissible at diocesan events. It is advisable to refrain from serving hard liquor, and this decision should be carefully considered by the event organizers. Shots should never be served. Drinking games or other activities which encourage rapid consumption or the consumption of large amounts of alcohol are prohibited.

Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages: Any event with alcohol present should also have easily accessible food and non-alcoholic beverages available.

Event Publicity: All publicity mentioning alcohol must also refer to non-alcoholic beverages and food in an equally prominent way. No publicity may encourage the overindulgence of alcohol with terms like "free beer" or "all you can drink."

Bring Your Own Beverages (BYOB): A BYOB policy is strongly discouraged at events, even when the event is exclusively 21+. It becomes difficult to monitor access to alcohol when participants bring their own drinks and may allow anyone to help themselves to the alcohol. It may be permissible for participants to bring alcohol to contribute to an event if, upon arrival, it is immediately surrendered to a bartender who is controlling the alcohol for the duration of the event.

Catering: Contracting with a caterer for service of alcohol is always preferred. The contract with the caterer should ensure that the caterer is responsible for state licensing, liability coverage, and for monitoring access to alcohol.

Events Sponsored by Independent or Private Groups

Independent groups, such as the Knights of Columbus, serving alcohol at an event sponsored by them are responsible to obtain the required state licenses and to follow the diocesan alcohol policy when the event is held at a diocesan location.

The organizer of a private party or reception, like an anniversary dinner or wedding reception, held at a diocesan location must follow the diocesan alcohol policy, and is required to obtain either a Banquet License for the event or make sure the caterer is licensed.

Insurance and Liability Coverage

A Host Liquor Liability policy is provided by the diocese to cover diocesan employees and volunteers performing diocesan related services at any diocesan location, regardless of



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

whether the property is leased or owned. Certain events held at off-site locations offering alcohol to participants may or may not be covered depending on all circumstances related to the event. The diocesan insurance does not apply to events held in a private residence, as the homeowner is the responsible party. Additionally, when holding events in a public location, such as a pub, restaurant, or a special room at a gallery, liability coverage is the responsibility of that specific location. If alcohol was not advertised or intended to be part of the event, but a participant brings it in unbeknownst to the event organizer, anything that happens related to the alcohol becomes the responsibility of the person who brought it.

Employee Consumption of Alcohol

In accordance with the Diocese of Arlington Employee Handbook, employees are not allowed to be under the influence of, or in possession of, alcohol, while on diocesan property (whether owned or leased), and/or while performing diocesan business, and/or during diocesan work time, and/or while operating a vehicle or machine leased or owned by the Diocese. Some exceptions exist:

- when an official event is planned in which alcohol is being offered to all legal event participants following the other procedures of this policy (for example, a parish dinner party or reception at which alcohol is being served).
- when a priest or resident living on diocesan property is in possession of or consuming alcohol (with or without guests) in moderation within their own private residence.
- A diocesan employee is permitted to drink alcohol while at an official dinner meeting at a restaurant.

Diocesan Funds

Diocesan policy does not permit reimbursement for the cost of alcoholic drinks purchased for personal consumption during meals or even at official diocesan events. This includes business travel. Even if an employee desires to drink alcohol at a diocesan event with a cash bar, which is always at the cost of the employee.

Diocesan or parish funds can be used for alcohol purchased for sacramental purposes or for official sponsored events that will be monitored according to the other procedures of this policy. (For example, a pastor may use parish funds to pay for alcoholic drinks at a holiday dinner party at a restaurant if they are within budget and all other policies are followed.) Additional exceptions may be made upon approval of the Diocesan Finance Officer, Chief Operations Officer, or Vicar General.

Youth Events

In accordance with the *Code of Conduct for Personnel and Volunteers in the Diocese of*




CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

Arlington, events or meetings designated specifically for youth (legal minors) must never involve alcohol. Adult volunteers shall refrain from consuming alcoholic beverages for four hours in advance of a youth event. Adult volunteers shall refrain from consuming alcohol in the presence of children at any in-person or virtual event or activity.

International Events

When traveling to countries where the drinking age is less than 21 (or on international flights), all participants should continue to follow the drinking age of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Anyone under 21 who is found purchasing or consuming alcohol will forfeit the remainder of their trip and will be sent home at their own expense. This should be made clear to all participants prior to registering for the trip as a part of signing their permission slip and release statement.

Given from the Office of the Bishop of Arlington
June 6, 2024



Michael F. Burbidge

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington

Robert J. Rippy

Very Reverend Robert J. Rippy, J.C.L., J.V.
Chancellor