

# PARTY PLANNING GUIDE



To help you plan and host an event that is stress-free and enjoyable for you and your guests, BC Liquor Stores developed this guide with all the ingredients for successful and memorable entertaining. These hosting tips can help take some of the guesswork and headaches out of planning a great party.

## Be the Host with the Most

Plan to drink minimally or not at all. You'll be better able to avoid potential problems if you can think clearly and act quickly. If someone is drinking too much, engage them in conversation, offer snacks and a non-alcoholic drink.

## Treat Alcohol with Respect

Alcohol produces a wide range of physical and mental effects that vary from one individual to another. Even at low levels, it may affect perception, judgement, coordination and decision-making long before there are obvious signs of impairment.

## Designate Drivers

Before the party gets going, it's important to make sure all your guests have planned for a safe trip home. Know who the designated drivers will be. Then, serve them accordingly—that means no alcohol whatsoever.

## Take the Fizz Out

If you serve an alcoholic punch, use a non-carbonated base, such as fruit juice. The body absorbs alcohol faster when mixed with carbonation, as in mixed drinks with carbonated mixes or sparkling wines.

## Measuring Up

Mix and serve drinks yourself or appoint a trustworthy bartender rather than letting guests serve themselves. Be sure to measure drinks and avoid serving doubles or shots. Don't refill glasses readily. Never let children serve or consume alcohol. For larger gatherings, consider hiring a Serving It Right-trained bartender ([www.servingitright.com](http://www.servingitright.com)) or taking the training yourself.

## A Drink is a Drink

Despite appearances, a standard serving of beer, wine or spirits each contains an equal amount of absolute alcohol. That means a 341 ml beer (5% alcohol per volume, a 140 ml glass of wine (12% alc./vol.) and a 30 ml serving of spirits (40% alc./vol.) are all equal in alcohol content. Use a shot glass to measure drinks. Guessing can lead to excessive consumption.

## planning a great party

Great parties don't just happen by chance. They're the result of careful, detailed planning.

We know you care about your friends, family and guests, and have designed this guide with tips to help you keep everyone safe at your get-togethers. Whether you're hosting a backyard barbecue, an intimate dinner party with friends or a wedding, you'll be able to enjoy the event knowing you've created a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere for you and your guests.

When you host an event where alcohol is being served, you want your guests to enjoy themselves and, once it's over, to get home safely. Being aware of potential problems and planning ahead can help minimize the risks, keep your entertaining fun and safe.

## hosting and your responsibilities

You can be held responsible for what happens to your guests while they are in your home, on your property or at any function or party you organize, regardless of the location.

As well, when you entertain and are in charge of the premises and who attends, you are responsible for taking steps to protect all your guests from harm, including those who may be impaired or intoxicated. This means ensuring the location is safe for all guests, protecting them from risk of injury others may pose, and ensuring that activities taking place at the event don't pose a risk of injury.

Exercise caution and follow these tips to help keep things safer once the party's started:

## No Means No

Never make drinking the focus of your event or force drinks on your guests. If someone says no to a drink, be sure to offer them non-alcoholic alternatives or mocktails. Also, do not force abstainers to make a public statement by serving alcohol in one type of glass and soft drinks in another. Plan on providing plenty of water and non-alcoholic beverages. Guests may also appreciate you including low-alcohol beers and wines in your bar.

## Serve Food

Alcohol is generally absorbed into the bloodstream faster on an empty stomach, while food in the stomach tends to slow down the absorption of alcohol. If you serve alcohol, always have plenty of easily accessible food on hand. If you're not serving a meal, have plenty of high-protein and carbohydrate foods available, such as cheese, meats, unsalted chips, crackers, nuts and bread. High-moisture content foods, such as raw vegetables and fruits, with low-calorie dips are also good choices. Avoid salty and greasy snacks, which tend to make people thirstier.

## A Bad Mix

Never serve alcohol to minors. In British Columbia, the legal drinking age is 19 years. Nor should you plan strenuous activities or sports when you're serving alcohol. People may be more prone to accidents when they've been drinking.

## Last Call

Never serve guests to the point of intoxication. Stop serving alcohol at least an hour before the end of the party. Close down the bar and make the transition by serving enticing desserts and coffee or other non-alcoholic drinks.

## Happy Trails

Be prepared to arrange rides for guests with sober drivers, drive them yourself, or provide taxi fare. Be sure to have taxi numbers ready in advance. Never, ever let anyone who's been drinking get behind the wheel of a vehicle.

## Check it Out

Check on your home insurance policy's third-party liability coverage. Contact your insurance provider to help you understand your risks and responsibilities as a host and minimize potential problems. Following the advice of your insurer can help you ensure a safe and entertaining event for you and your guests.

## need a special event permit?

If you are hosting an event where liquor will be sold at a location that is not licensed OR where liquor will be served or sold in a public space, you will need a licence. Events held at private residences or licensed establishments do not require Special Event Permits.

You can apply for a Special Event Permit online at <https://specialevents.bcladb.com>. It's convenient and simple!

Pick up a brochure at your local BC Liquor Store or go online to <https://specialevents.bcladb.com> for more information.



**SPECIAL EVENT PERMITS**  
A Special Event Permit allows the host of an event to serve or sell liquor.



Apply for a permit online at:  
<https://specialevents.bcladb.com>

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## how much do you need?

Here are some buying guidelines you may find useful. These are purchasing guidelines only. You can adapt the amounts (percentages) per category to suit your guests' and your product preferences.

This table is based on four drinks per person during a three hour event. Beer is calculated based on cases of 12 bottles/cans. Wine is calculated based on 750 ml bottles or 6 x 125 ml glasses. Spirits are calculated based on 750 ml bottles or 24 drinks.

guests	beer (50%)	wine (30%)	spirits (20%)
12	2	2	1
25	4	3	1
50	9	10	2
100	16	20	3
150	25	30	5
200	33	40	7
250	42	50	8
300	50	60	10

## responsible hosting checklist

In addition to carefully planning and organizing your event, here are some suggestions to help reduce the risks of alcohol-related problems when entertaining and to help ensure your guests arrive home safely.

- 1 Always provide low-alcohol and alcohol-free beverages, such as mocktails, non-alcoholic punch, pop, bottled water, tea and coffee.
- 2 Serve snacks with drinks and always have food available throughout the party to avoid drinking on an empty stomach. Avoid serving salty, sweet or greasy snack foods as guests will become thirstier. High-starch and protein foods such as meats, veggies, cheeses, light dips and breads are good choices.
- 3 Don't plan strenuous activities when you serve alcohol. People are generally more prone to injury or mishap after drinking.
- 4 Serve drinks yourself or designate a bartender instead of having an open bar, as guests usually drink more when they serve themselves. Avoid serving doubles and keep a shot glass or jigger next to the bottles—good measurement makes all the difference.
- 5 Have a plan to deal with any guest who drinks too much. Find out how guests will be getting home from your party. Promote the use of designated drivers and keep cash and telephone numbers on hand for taxis. Encourage your guests to leave their cars at home and take public transportation, cabs or walk home. Never allow guests to drink and drive or ride with anyone who has been drinking.
- 6 Stop serving alcoholic beverages at least an hour before the party is over. Serve alcohol-free drinks (bottled water, juice, coffee and tea) and food. Remember, however, that having coffee after drinking doesn't make you sober.
- 7 Plan ahead so that it's easy to follow this advice.
- 8 As the host, drink minimally or not at all, so you can think clearly and act quickly to deal with or avoid potential problems.