

# BEST BAR NONE



## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

*This publication is meant as a guide only and the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission is not liable for reliance on the information contained herein. Nothing in this publication should be construed as legal opinion or advice. Where legal issues arise, the services of a legal professional should be sought.*

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# INTRODUCTION

Best Bar None (BBN) is an accreditation and awards program, promoting the responsible management and operation of alcohol-licensed premises. The program aims to reduce alcohol-related harms by raising the standards of licensed premises and building positive relationships among all stakeholders – operators of licensed premises, industry partners, law enforcement and concerned community groups.

This guide provides suggestions to help you (bar managers and owners) develop thorough and effective policies and procedures for your team that will reflect your establishment's goals and unique challenges.

We recommend that you refer to the Best Bar None Criteria Explanation Booklet for additional information and details. Additional resources can be found online and include the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission's *Liquor Laws and You; An Operating Guide for Licensed Premises* ([www.aglc.ca](http://www.aglc.ca)), and the education page of the Public Safety Compliance Team on the Responsible Hospitality Edmonton website ([www.responsiblehospitalityedmonton.ca](http://www.responsiblehospitalityedmonton.ca)). "No More Risky Business: A Guide to Writing Bar Policies to Keep Customers Safe and Avoid Liability" can be purchased from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), located in Ontario ([http://www.camh.net/Publications/CAMH\\_Publications/no\\_more\\_risky\\_business.html](http://www.camh.net/Publications/CAMH_Publications/no_more_risky_business.html)).

Many of the **ESSENTIAL** criteria items, required to meet the accreditation standards, must have written policies and/or procedures. This guide also covers policies and procedures required by the optional **DESIRED** and **BONUS** criteria, necessary for award consideration.

## WHY ARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IMPORTANT?

Developing thorough policies and procedures for your staff to follow may help your establishment run smoothly, efficiently and responsibly. Written policy and procedure ensures every employee and manager has the same information on a variety of topics; with the goal they will understand the policy as well as the procedure for enforcing and carrying out policy. Maintaining your operating information in one agreed upon location will make the information accessible and keep you and your staff organized and informed.

**Policies** reflect "the rules". *Policy is the reason for procedure.*

- These could be rules that you impose based on what you think is important in the operation of your business or based on external factors such as the Gaming and Liquor Act (GLA), the AGLC Licensee Handbook, municipal bylaws or agreements with landlords, etc.

**Procedures** represent an implementation of policy. *Procedure ensures policies are carried out and/or enforced.*

- They describe how to manage a situation, the order that things are to be done and who performs each task. Procedures will evolve over time as new tools emerge, new processes are designed and as the risks associated with a procedure change in response to internal or external environmental changes.

***Policies provide the rules – procedures provide the means to follow them.***

# DEVELOPING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

A **suggested** policy statement, **suggested** format, as well as information to consider when writing or revising policy and procedure, is provided in this document. **You may choose to state your policy (or procedural guidelines) differently, and you may choose to use another format.** Regardless of the wording and format that you choose, the wording should give clear and specific, and the design should be simple, consistent and easy to use. You may choose to combine policy and procedure into one document or keep them separate.

Some basic information should be provided when writing policy and procedure:

- Numbering your policies may help you keep organized.
- The date that the policy was created or revised is recommended. (This helps ensure that your policies and procedures are current.)
- What is the policy? (State what your policy is.)
- Why is the policy important? What is its purpose? (Should include reference to Best Bar None, legislation, AGLC Policy, municipal regulations, etc. Refer to the Best Bar None Criteria Explanation Booklet for details.)
- Who is the policy directed at? Who does it apply to? (All staff? Some staff? Patrons?)
- When is the policy applicable?
- What is the procedure for enforcing or carrying out the policy? (Can be detailed and step-by-step, or general. Should include assigned tasks or responsibilities. Consider consultation with authorities or legal counsel.)

## EFFECTIVE POLICIES...

- Address what the rule is, rather than how to implement the rule.
- Are written in clear, concise, simple language.
- Managers and supervisors should be considered policy experts and should be available to interpret policies and resolve problems.

## EFFECTIVE PROCEDURES...

- Are tied to policies. They help the staff conform to or follow the policy.
- Provide benefits to the user by being well-developed and thought-out.
- Involve the staff in enforcing policy and meeting the goals of the establishment.
- Are understandable and written so that what needs to be done can easily be followed by all users.

## SUGGESTED STYLE FOR WRITING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- Concise and to the point; not wordy. Factual.
- Don't include information that may become outdated (e.g., avoid names of people - use positions instead).
- If acronyms are used, spell them out the first time you use them.
- Include step-by-step instructions for completing tasks or documentation.
- Avoid being too technical—keep it understandable for new employees.

# SAMPLE POLICY AND PROCEDURE FORMAT

This is a *suggested* format that you can refer to when developing your own policies or/and procedures. You may choose to use another format if you prefer.

Some criteria require policy but not procedure. Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.

Some criteria require procedure but not policy. Procedure explains how to enforce policy, so you may find it useful to develop a policy. Some procedure can stand alone, without policy.

You may need to adjust the design of your document accordingly.

Your Logo or Company Information Here

## **POLICY NUMBER:**

*(Consider using a numbering system to keep organized.)*

## **POLICY DATE:**

*(Consider including the date that the policy was created or revised.)*

## **POLICY:**

*(What is the policy? Make a statement about what is allowed, permitted or acceptable OR what is not allowed, not permitted or unacceptable.)*

## **PURPOSE:**

*(Why is the policy important? What is its purpose? Should include reference to Best Bar None, legislated law, AGLC Policy, municipal regulations, etc. - Refer to the Best Bar None Criteria Explanation Booklet for details.)*

## **APPLICABLE TO:**

*(Who is the policy directed at? Who does it apply to? All staff? Some staff? Patrons? When does it apply?)*

## **PROCEDURE:**

*(What is the procedure for enforcing or carrying out the policy? Can be detailed and step-by-step, or general. Should include assigned tasks or responsibilities. Remember to include paperwork and reporting that is required.)*

# ESSENTIAL POLICY AND/OR PROCEDURE

## A1: LINEUPS

**“Have a written policy and procedure for managing lineups at entrance(s) to premises.”  
(ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“Lineups to enter the premises must be supervised.”

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- Refer to the Best Bar None Criteria Explanation Booklet
- (Indirect reference in: **AGLC LH 5.13.1** “The maximum occupant load of a licensed premises is normally established under the Fire Code and must not be exceeded at any time.”)

### **Information to consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- Managing lineups provides an opportunity for your staff to keep the crowd orderly and observe patrons for signs of intoxication and aggression. They also prevent problems such as ‘cutting in’.
- Bars that have nightly lineups will have door staff or management in place to supervise and monitor lineups. In bars without security staff, a supervisor, manager or bartender may need to decide to start a lineup on unexpectedly busy nights.
- Ensure all staff members are aware of the Occupant Load.
- If your room is often at or near capacity, you should have staff dedicated to managing the flow of customers. If this is a less common occurrence, staff may be less experienced or prepared and policy will prepare them and ensure they know what to do.
- Avoid obvious favouritism with “VIPs” or regulars. Customers waiting in line while others get preferred treatment may feel underappreciated, marginalized or hostile once they have entered your business. All customers should feel appreciated.
- Familiarize staff in policy and training with whatever equipment is needed to properly manage a lineup and how to use it. This could include stanchions, ropes, counting devices, scanning equipment, head count logs, cash collection equipment for cover charges, VIP lists, radios, etc.
- Try to communicate estimated wait times to keep patrons “in the loop” as to how long the wait might be. This is especially important on cold, winter nights.
- Re-entry: When a lineup has been established, patrons may request the ability to leave or re-enter the premises (perhaps to smoke or accompany friends to vehicles). Consider how you will manage re-entry. Determine the best balance between customer service and managing capacity. (Note: Bars cannot hold patrons’ government identification, such as Driver Licenses, as collateral until re-entry.)

## A2: WEAPONS

**“Have a written policy regarding weapons found or removed from patrons.”  
(ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy**

“Weapons are not permitted on the premises.”

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- **AGLC LH 1.5.3** covers a licensee’s responsibility to provide a safe environment for patrons.

### **Information to consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- Situations involving weapons can be unpredictable. When deciding how to proceed in dealing with situations involving weapons, staff should consider such factors as:
  - the safety of all patrons and staff in the room - especially the staff member dealing with the situation;
  - the state of mind of the patron with the weapon (calm, threatening, sober, intoxicated);
  - the type of weapon involved;
  - the level of threat (is the weapon being used threateningly or was it spotted in a pocket or purse?)
  - the location (is the patron already in the room or at the door?).
- Define “weapon”: Ensure staff members are clear what you consider to be a “weapon” and that it is defined in policy. This list should include the obvious (knives, guns, chains, etc.) but could also include other items (pocketknives, screwdrivers, scissors, nail files, etc.).
- Ensure searches are done with awareness of human rights and patron comfort (i.e., females searching females).
- If used at your premises, staff should be trained in the correct use of metal detectors or wands and how to perform pat-downs at the door. You should have policies and procedures relating to how and when to use these tools.
- It is a best practice to log all weapon incidents (this could include turning patrons away at the door carrying weapons) in incident reports.
- Consider consulting with your local police regarding this policy or development of related procedure.
- Weapons in licensed establishments are stereotypically associated with large nightclubs, “high-risk” neighbourhoods and clientele and are often considered “someone else’s problem”. Bars that have had problems with weapons in the past are likely to be more vigilant and aware of the risks. Locations that have rarely or never had a problem with weapons will find that a policy prepares them to deal with a situation that involves a weapon (either smuggled in or used in the premises).
- Consider posting signage at the door or entrance stating that weapons are forbidden.
- Links to other criteria, including: A3, A10 and A19

## A3: CALLING OR CONTACTING POLICE

**“Have a written policy on how and when police are to be called.” (ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

- “The police must be contacted when:
  - illegal drugs have been found or seized on premises;
  - a patron is found using or selling illegal drugs;
  - (include additional situations, such as those below, in your policy.)”

### **You may choose to add additional situations of when to call the police in your policy, such as:**

- An assault has occurred
- An act of theft or vandalism
- A weapon has been found on premises or on a patron
- A patron refuses to leave when requested to do so
- A patron is causing a disturbance outside the entrance or exit to your premises
- Customer reports a sexual assault
- Customer reports being threatened

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- **AGLC LH 5.9.3** “Licensees must report any illegal drug activities identified on a licensed premises to police.”
- **AGLC LH 5.6.6** provides guidance on dealing with unruly patrons, including requesting police assistance and “being prepared to proceed with charges”.
- **AGLC LH 12.1.10:** “The AGLC supports and encourages police ‘walk through’ programs. Every police officer is considered an Inspector under the GLA, and licensees and their staff are required to cooperate fully with police officers who enter the licensed premises.”

### **Information to Consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- Ensure patron and staff policy are considered when writing this policy.
- Include all emergency numbers in the policy manual and post them in the premises.
- Determine *who* calls the police (managers, supervisors, bartenders, etc.) to prevent more than one person calling police, or no one calling police.
- Ensure staff are aware of all situations that should be reported to police and the procedure to do so. Procedure should include an internal reporting process (for example, “staff are required to report the incident or suspicion to the on-shift manager who will contact police if necessary”) and completing documentation when contacting the police is warranted.
- Consider consulting with your local police regarding this policy or development of related procedure.
- Invite local police to do “walk-throughs” and ask them what you can do to improve communication and build a relationship with them.
- Links to other criteria including: A2, A6, A7, A11, A10, B12 and B 19.

## A4: PREMISES EVACUATION

**“Have a written procedure for premises evacuation in the event of emergency (fire, power loss, etc.)” (ESSENTIAL)**

***Note: Although policy is not required, it may assist you in developing your procedure.***

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“Staff are to follow the evacuation procedure in emergency situations to ensure that all persons (patrons and staff) are safely, efficiently and quickly evacuated from the building when necessary.”

### **Information to Consider:**

- Procedure should identify who determines when an evacuation is necessary, and who announces evacuations.
- Provide detailed procedures and assign tasks appropriate to your business. Who meets the emergency personnel? Who tends to the alarms? Is there documentation or cash that should be taken in event of an evacuation? Should doors be closed? Kitchen equipment turned off? Who determines if and when it is safe to re-enter? Etc.
- A list of situations that warrant an evacuation could be listed (examples: fires, fire alarms, power outages, gas or chemical leaks, violent acts, pepper spray, etc.).
- Post a map or diagram near the entrance of your premises that clearly outlines exit routes, fire exits and muster points. (Check with your local fire department for requirements that they may have.)
- If your business is part of a shared building (hotel, mall, strip mall) work with the landlord and neighbours to ensure consistency.
- Include all emergency numbers in the policy manual and post them in the premises.
- If necessary, consult with your local fire department for guidance.
- Links to other criteria, including: B15.

## A5: MANAGING SMOKING AREAS

**“Have a written policy and procedure for managing patron smoking areas.”  
(ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“Patron use of the designated smoking area(s) is to be managed by staff.”

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- Alberta’s *Tobacco Reduction Act* (2008) prohibits smoking in any public place or workplace or within five (5) metres of any doorway, window (the exception is a window that does not open) or air intake of a public place or workplace.

### **Information to consider:**

- Policy should clearly identify the designated smoking area(s). Maps or diagrams are useful.
- Assign responsibility for regular monitoring of the smoking areas. Including:
  - Ensuring patrons smoke only in the designated smoking area.
  - Monitoring customer behaviour (ensuring they are not bothering neighbouring businesses or other patrons who are smoking or entering or exiting the establishment).
  - Ensuring the area is clean and tidy (ashtrays are supplied and not overflowing, cigarette butts picked up).
  - Ensuring beverages and glassware are not permitted in the smoking area.
  - The return of patrons from the smoking area to the premises.
- Determine how to manage patrons who want to exit the building to smoke and then return to the premises.
- Signage to instruct or guide patrons is helpful.
- Consider a policy for patrons and staff. (Policies could be combined to one policy.)
- The staff smoking area could be separate from the patron smoking area. Staff policy should include hand washing prior to returning to work if handling food or beverages.

## A6: PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL DRUG SALES AND USE

**“Have a written policy on prevention of illegal drug sales and use on the premises.”  
(ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“The sale or use of illegal drugs by patrons or staff on this premises is strictly prohibited. Staff are required to assist in the prevention of illegal drug activity.”

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- Refer to **Section 5.9** of the AGLC Licensee Handbook AGLC Licensee Handbook for detailed guidelines to help staff identify and prevent drug use or trafficking. Additional useful information is in the AGLC’s “Liquor Laws and You” operating guide for licensed premises.

### **Items to Consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- This policy pertains to providing measures to prevent the sale and use of drugs on your premises.
- Policy will increase staff awareness and make your establishment less attractive to drug users or dealers. Consider posting signage notifying patrons of the policy.
- Consider consulting with your local police for guidance in developing an effective illegal drug prevention strategy.
- Links to other criteria including: A7, A11, A10, A19 and B12.

## **A7: ILLEGAL DRUGS DISPOSAL**

**“Have a written policy requiring staff to contact police if illegal drugs are found on the premises or seized from a patron.” (ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“All illegal drugs found on the premises must be immediately turned in or reported to the manager on shift, who will contact police.”

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- **AGLC LH 5.9.2** “If suspected illegal drug activities are taking place on the licensed premises, staff must report the activity to management.”
- **AGLC LH 5.9.3** “Licensees must report any illegal drug activities identified on a licensed premises to police.”

### **Information to consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- The AGLC policies listed above state that identified illegal drug activities must be reported to police. Illegal drugs seized or found on premises must be turned over to police. Failure to do so could suggest complicity or a relaxed attitude toward drug use or trafficking.
- It is an offense to be in possession of illegal drugs or to have them on your property.
- Consider consulting with local police for guidance in developing an illegal drug disposal policy and accompanying procedures for reporting to police and handling of the drugs. Police may also provide guidance regarding legalities of searches and seizure.
- Links to other criteria, including: A3, A6, A10, A11, A19 and B12.

## A8: GLASS COLLECTION

**“Have a written glass collection policy (i.e. that bottles and glassware are removed from tables frequently and broken glass is cleaned up promptly).” (ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy**

“Empty bottles and glassware are to be removed from tables promptly and broken glass is to be cleared from patron areas quickly to prevent injury to patrons and staff.”

### **Information to consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- Consider identifying which staff members are responsible for clearing tables or cleaning and disposing of broken glass.
- Describe the use, location and availability of all equipment required to remove hazards (brooms, dustpans, glass containers, etc.)
- Identify that broken glass is disposed of separately from the regular trash and disposed of safely.
- Emphasize the need for safety:
  - Broken glass left uncleared is a hazard to staff and patrons and has resulted in liability issues.
  - Empty glassware and bottles left unattended and not promptly cleared can be knocked over and broken or used as weapons.
  - Empty bottles should be stored, collected and organized in an area out of the reach of guests.
  - Unattended drinks are removed.
- Links to other criteria, including: A9, A11.

## A9: MONITORING PATRONS FOR GLASS

**“Have a written policy that staff are to monitor departing patrons to ensure that alcohol containers (bottles or glassware—full or empty) are not being removed from the premises.” (ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“Patrons are not permitted to remove bottles or glassware (full or empty) from the premises.”

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- **GLR Section 91.1(2):** “No liquor licensee or employee or agent of a liquor licensee may allow a person to remove liquor from the licensed premises except a partially consumed bottle of wine sold or provided to that person by the licensee.”
- **AGLC LH 5.3.15:** “All liquor must be consumed on the licensed premises except: a) liquor purchased for off premises consumption under a Class D licence (off sales); b) a partially consumed bottle(s) of wine in a Class A, B, C (Club) licensed premises that is sealed by licensee staff and placed in a bag; and c) liquor provided under a Caterer’s Extension.”

### **Information to consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- Patrons from other countries may not be aware that you cannot leave the premises with open liquor. Do not assume that patrons know liquor laws.
- The bar’s local reputation (or “footprint”) will be negatively affected if outgoing patrons are littering or vandalizing your neighbourhood with bottles and glassware.
- Use this as an opportunity to reinforce the need for great customer service. It is a good business practice to thank patrons as they leave, encouraging repeat business by ending their visit with a positive interaction with staff. At that point, they can be monitored for glassware. They can also be monitored for intoxication levels. In either case, intervention may be necessary.
- Links to other criteria, including: A8 and A17

## **B10: LIQUOR SERVICE TO MINORS**

**“Have a written zero tolerance policy for employees serving liquor to minors.”  
(ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy**

“Staff are not permitted to give, sell or serve liquor to a minor in this premises. Offending staff will face disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.”

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- **GLA Section 75:** “No person may give or sell or permit any person to give or sell liquor to a minor in a licensed premises.”
- **GLA Section 74:** Covers “Minors on licensed premises” in detail. Please refer to the legislation.
- **AGLC LH 5.5.1:** “It is an offense under the GLA to sell or provide liquor to anyone under 18 years of age. Management and staff of a licensed premises are responsible to ensure liquor is not sold or provided to minors.”

### **Information to consider:**

- Staff are required to ask for acceptable forms of identification (per the AGLC Licensee Handbook, Section 5.5) from patrons who appear to be under 25 years of age.
- Consider creating a “Staff Conduct” policy and including criteria B10, B11 and B12 in that policy.

## **B11: LIQUOR CONSUMPTION BY STAFF ON DUTY**

**“Have a written zero tolerance policy stating no staff consumption of liquor while on duty.” (ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy**

“Staff are not permitted to drink liquor while on duty. Offending staff will face disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.”

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- **AGLC LH 5.3.18:** “Licensee staff may not consume liquor or be under the influence of liquor or drugs while on duty. However, it is acceptable for staff to consume an alcoholic beverage after their shift ends and for the Board-approved manager/owner of the licensed premises to consume an alcoholic beverage while entertaining a client.”
- **AGLC LH 5.6.1 and 5.6.2** covers proper supervision of patrons by “trained and capable” staff.

### **Information to consider:**

- Consider creating a “Staff Conduct” policy and including criteria B10, B11 and B12 in that policy.

## B12: ILLEGAL DRUG SALES OR USE

**“Have a written zero tolerance policy regarding the sale and use of illegal drugs within the facility (applies to staff and patrons).” (ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“The sale or use of illegal drugs by patrons or staff is strictly prohibited in this premises. All offenses will be reported to the police. Offending patrons will be removed and banned. Offending staff will face disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.”

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- **GLA Section 69(1):** “No liquor licensee or employee or agent of a liquor licensee may permit any activity in the licensed premises that a) is contrary to any municipal bylaw or any Act or regulation of Alberta or Canada.”
- **AGLC Licensee Handbook Section 5.9** provides detailed guidelines to help staff identify and prevent drug use or trafficking.

### **Items to Consider:**

- This policy pertains to dealing with the sale and use of drugs on your premises if or when it happens.
- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- Policy and/or procedure should include notifying the designated supervisor on shift of confirmed or suspected illegal drugs on the premises.
- Consider consulting with your local police for guidance in developing an effective illegal drug prevention strategy and accompanying procedures for reporting to police and handling of the drugs. Police may also provide guidance regarding legalities of searches and seizure.
- Consider posting signage notifying patrons of the policy.
- Consider creating a “Staff Conduct” policy and including criteria B10, B11 and B12 in that policy.
- Links to other criteria, including: A3, A6, A7, A11, A10, A19 and B12.

# DESIRED POLICY AND/OR PROCEDURE

## A10: SEARCHING PATRONS

**“Have a written policy on searching patrons.” (DESIRED)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“To prevent contraband items (e.g. weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs) from being brought onto the premises, patrons are searched at the entrance for such items.”

### **Information to consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- Does the basic policy statement need to specify when searches are done? Do searches happen every night, or only when the manager directs them to be done? This will depend upon the size and clientele of your premises. It may also depend upon the occurrence of special or seasonal events.
- Patron searches at the door are often considered a “big city” or a “nightclub” practice. Invasive pat-downs, purse or bag inspections, metal detectors or wands can increase safety but run the risk of turning away “good” patrons as well as “undesirable”.  
The decision to conduct searches is the establishment’s decision. If it is deemed to be a desired business practice, ensure that policy gives staff full instruction as to:
  - Who conducts searches? Door staff? Do males search females?
  - How often are searches conducted? (Only during certain events or nights?)
  - What are you looking for? (What items are you trying to prevent patrons from bringing into the venue?)
  - How is contraband dealt with? (Deny entrance? Seizure? Incident report?)
- Ensuring staff know what to do is important, especially if it is not common practice. For example, a patron may be suspected of smuggling his or her own booze into your lounge. A bag search may be required. How would you want them to handle it? Or a patron may enter with a large or bulky purse or bag and there is a suspicion of contraband. Staff would need to be aware of their rights to search and the proper procedures to do so.
- Include instruction for staff on how to handle situations when contraband is found.
- Consider consulting with local police or legal counsel for guidance in developing policy and to ensure your search policies and procedures are legal and respect both your rights as a business owner and service provider and the customer’s rights. Police may be able to provide guidance regarding handling contraband.
- Reinforce the need for tact, professionalism and sensitivity when conducting searches or pat-downs. Searches can play a role in preventing contraband from entering your establishment and may also deter unsavoury clientele (it sends a proactive message to troublemakers). However, if conducted with a “heavy hand” they can also alienate customers.
- Consider posting signage to inform patrons that searches may be conducted.
- Links to other criteria, including: A2, A3, A6, A7, A11, A19 and B12.

# A11: “DATE RAPE” DRUGS / DRUG-FACILITATED SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS

“Have a written policy in place to make staff aware of and prevent the use of “date rape” drugs.” (DESIRED)

## Suggested Basic Policy:

“Staff are required to be aware of and attempt to prevent potential situations when “date rape” drugs may be or have been administered to a patron.”

## Information to Consider:

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure policy is understood and followed.
- Staff should be aware that alcohol intoxication (purposeful or unintentional) also creates opportunities for offenders to take advantage of incapacitated, unwilling targets.
- As part of this policy, include information to help staff know what to watch for to increase staff awareness, and how to intervene. For example:

### **“Date Rape” Drug Facts and Information:**

- *Date Rape drugs include: GHD (Gama Hydroxybutyric Acid), Rohypnol (Flunitrazepam), Ketamine (Ketamine Hydroxide)*
- *These drugs are essentially tasteless and can be liquid with no odor or color, a white powder or a pill that dissolves in liquid.*
- *Drugs can easily be put into an unattended beverage or if someone, other than a bartender or server gives them a drink. Encourage bar and serving staff to deliver drinks purchased by a patron for others, rather than the “donor” delivering them. Discourage patrons from leaving drinks unattended. Consider producing umbrellas or stir sticks with messaging for servers to put into unattended drinks. Message could say: “You left your drink unattended; Unattended drinks are at risk of being drugged. Be safe; order a new drink.”*
- *If bag searches or pat-downs are employed, watch for liquid containers (e.g. Visine) or other containers that could be used to transport date rape drugs. Inspect washrooms regularly (for drugs and also for drugged patrons).*
- *As opposed to gradual intoxication from alcohol, these substances take effect very quickly, often being the only clue that a person has been drugged,. Watch patrons closely for exhibiting sudden signs of drowsiness or confusion (difficulty speaking, difficulty with motor skills, etc.) and in a vulnerable state.*
- *Females are the most common victim of date rape drugging, however males are sometimes accidentally or even purposefully drugged for a variety of reasons.*
- *Use judgment at the door when patrons are leaving. If a patron is incapacitated and leaving with a g or individual, encourage staff to ask questions to ensure the patron is leaving in safe hands. Slow the patrons down at the door if necessary and ask questions to stall or gain information (How was your night? etc. If it’s a female patron, ask if they have a girlfriend with them. Ask for identification. Make notes. Friends will be cooperative; assaulters will not want to leave a record. Subjects under the influence of these drugs are open to coercion and can unfortunately go along willingly with an assaulter’s wishes.). If unconvinced that the subject is in “safe hands”, consider calling police or an ambulance.*
- Consider consulting with your local police or sexual assault centre to develop policy.
- Links to other criteria, including: A3, A6, A7, A11, A10, A19 and B12.

## A12: “SOFT CLOSING”

“Have a policy in effect for ‘soft closing’ (i.e., lights gradually ‘go up’ and music / entertainment ceases at last call.” (DESIRED)

### Suggested Basic Policy:

“Use ‘soft close techniques to provide patrons with gradual and ample notice to exit the establishment after last call.”

### Relevant Legislation:

- **AGLC LH GUIDELINE 5.1.9** “‘Last call’ must be timed to ensure patrons who order liquor are served within the hours of liquor service specified on the licence.”
- **GLA 71(1)** “Except in those licensed premises prescribed in the regulations, every person other than the liquor licensee and the liquor licensee’s employees or agents must leave licensed premises when the sale or consumption of liquor in those premises are required to cease under the regulations or stadium bylaws”

### Information to consider:

- Alberta liquor laws state that all liquor service must stop by 2AM with consumption to 3AM at the latest. Last call should be timed to allow a reasonable time to ensure service is provided prior to 2AM. Refer to your liquor licence and build policy to ensure compliance to the hours specified. A policy and adequate procedure to ensure these demands are met will help your establishment stay compliant with AGLC policy.
- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed. Procedure would guide steps taken by staff between last call (drinks are no longer sold) and closing the doors to end the evening. (See sample provided.)
- Here are some suggestions for Soft Closing:
  - Bring the lights up gradually, getting brighter as time passes.
  - Lower the music levels, to indicate to patrons that the evening is ending and the premises is closing.
  - Cease entertainment. Shut down pool tables. Turn televisions off.
  - Collect unclaimed glassware and bottles, stack unattended chairs and tables.
  - Remind patrons that the evening is done. Do so in a firm, yet tactful, manner.
  - If a coat check is used, ensure it is adequately staffed to prevent exit issues and delays.
  - Generally, the more patrons in the room, the earlier it is suggested to begin the closing process.
- Practicing a deliberate “soft closing” will allow patrons to leave in an organized fashion, rather than all at once at the last minute. This will make it easier for patrons to secure taxis and could also prevent crowding, frustration and potential violence.
- “Soft closing” and solid procedures for closing will help the night end more smoothly, allowing staff to complete end-of-night tasks (cleaning, cash outs, inventory) more efficiently. This can also cut down on labour hours (staff will not need to remain as late at night) and improve staff morale (less headaches and stress attempting to get patrons to leave).
- Links to other criteria, including: A17.

## A12: “SOFT CLOSING” cont’d

### Sample “Soft Close” Procedure:

1:30 am	First Last Call DJ to announce “Last Call” clearly.
1:55 am	Final Last Call Last chance – Finish all drink orders
2:00 am	Close Bar(s) – Cease drink sales
2:05 am	Music level low; band/DJ finished – lights slightly up
2:15 am	Lights brighter (or full). Circulate through room reminding patrons to finish drinks. Clear glassware.
2:30 am	Lights should be full. Music off. Televisions off. Keep circulating, clearing glassware, strongly urging patrons to leave.
2:45 am	Patrons should be gone. Drinks and glassware cleared from room.
2:55 am	Secure room. Conduct walkthrough.

**Determine your own Soft Close prompts, timelines, targets and deadlines for staff.**

## A13: PREGNANT PATRON

**“Have a written policy empowering and encouraging staff to offer free, or reduced cost, non-alcoholic beverages to pregnant women.” (DESIRED)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“Staff are encouraged to offer and provide free (or discounted) non-alcoholic beverages to pregnant patrons.”

### **Information to consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- Give guidance to staff regarding sensitivities (e.g., assuming a patron is pregnant and embarrassing or offending the patron).
- Policies like this allow staff to offer and provide non-alcoholic drinking alternatives to pregnant patrons, decreasing the fetus' to risk of exposure to alcohol and reducing or eliminating the risk of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).
- Alcohol consumed by a pregnant woman is passed to the growing fetus. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is the term used to describe the range of permanent birth defects caused by maternal consumption of alcohol during pregnancy. A safe amount of liquor for a pregnant woman to consume has not been determined, so the safest choice is not to drink at all.
- Additional FASD information is available at <http://www.fasd-cmc.alberta.ca>.
- Consider advertising this policy in your premises (e.g. drinks menu, tent cards, ladies washroom) to show patrons that you support their decision not to consume alcohol while pregnant, and to allow the patron to request your offer. (Links to desired criteria D23 and bonus criteria D36.)

## A14: DESIGNATED DRIVER POLICIES

**“Have a written policy empowering and encouraging staff to offer free, or reduced cost, non-alcoholic beverages or food to designated drivers.” (DESIRED)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“Staff are encouraged to offer and provide free non-alcoholic beverages or discounted food to designated drivers.”

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- **AGLC LH 1.5.5:** “Licensee management should also implement a program to reduce impaired driving. For example, the Designated Driver Program encourages groups to identify one person who will abstain from alcoholic beverages and take responsibility for driving others in the group safely home.”

### **Information to consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- Offering discounted or free non-alcoholic drink options or food to designated drivers encourages patrons to drink responsibly and provide safe transportation and supports them in this decision.
- Give guidance to staff to allow them to identify a designated driver within a group. (eg., A round of drinks is ordered by a newly seated group of patrons; one individual orders a non-alcoholic drink or no drink at all. This may be an opportunity to find out if this is the group’s designated driver, who would be offered free coffee or soft drinks.).
- Consider advertising this policy in your premises to show patrons that you support their decision to plan ahead and consume liquor responsibly if driving, and allows the patron to request your offer.
- Links to D37.

## A15: CLEANING UP BODILY FLUIDS

**“Have a written and posted policy for handling or cleaning up bodily fluids (e.g., vomit, blood, etc.) that includes ‘universal precautions.’” (DESIRED)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“To limit staff and patron exposure to potential health risks, staff are to promptly clean up bodily fluids (vomit, blood, etc.) using “Universal Precautions”. Staff are also expected to use “Universal Precautions” when handling items that have been in contact with bodily fluids (syringes, condoms, etc.).”

### **Information to consider:**

- Universal Precautions are infection control strategies and standards designed to protect workers from exposure to potential sources of infectious diseases. Routine practices are based on the premise that all blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, mucous membranes, non-intact skin or soiled items are potentially infectious. (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety; [www.ccohs.ca](http://www.ccohs.ca))
- Depending upon the situation, you may want to include that a face mask is used by staff.
- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed. Posting a procedure for staff to follow will provide staff with clear instructions. Consider the best location to post the procedure for staff reference.
- Consider if it is necessary to determine which staff are responsible for cleaning bodily fluids.
- Stress the importance of cleaning these products up as quickly as possible to reduce potential health risks, and to avoid detracting from your establishment’s ambience and reputation.
- Ensure staff know where to find all necessary cleaning supplies and equipment and that supplies are replenished as needed.

### **Suggested information to post:**

#### **Universal Precautions:**

##### ***To clean up blood or body fluids:***

- ***Put on disposable gloves.***
- ***Wipe up blood or body fluids with paper towels. Place contaminated paper towels in a new plastic garbage bag.***
- ***Clean and rinse area with paper towels and your usual disinfectant.***
- ***Wipe the surface with a cloth or paper towels and a 1:10 dilution of household bleach in water. (This concentration can be achieved by mixing 1 ounce of household bleach with 9 ounces of tap water.) This disinfectant has a shelf life of one shift ONLY.***
- ***Dispose of the cloth or paper towels into the same plastic garbage bag along with your gloves; removing gloves last.***
- ***Secure the bag with knot or tie. Dispose of plastic garbage bag***
- ***Wash hands thoroughly with soap & water for 5 minutes. Rinse under running water. Dry hands.***

## A16: NOISE

**“Have a written ‘noise’ policy.” (DESIRED)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“In consideration of the neighbourhood, noise and commotion is to be limited outside the building.”

### **Information to consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- Your noise policy should direct staff to be aware of the commotion and noise a bar can inflict on its neighbours. Excessive noise (music through windows or entrances, patio noise, patron noise) can make a bar an undesirable neighbour if not addressed and will result in complaints.
- Each premises will have a different policy that reflects the neighborhood they are in, the proximity to residential and commercial neighbours, and the hours of business of commercial neighbours.
- Noise policies can also cover noise levels within the room, ensuring guests and staff are in a safe, comfortable environment.
- You may want to obtain a dosimeter or sound level meter to measure sound levels and set acceptable decibel levels- both inside and outside your premises.
- The Occupational Health and Safety Code provides guidelines for noise exposure to staff.
- Sources of noise include
  - Patrons in smoking areas
  - Music from inside the bar filtering through windows or doors
  - Patio noise
- What can staff do to reduce or limit noise, commotion and disruption?
  - Closing doors or windows at certain times may help.
  - Maintaining a reasonable volume level of music.
  - Staff conducting exterior sound checks should consider the impact of the premises on the surrounding businesses and residences.
  - At a management level, get to know your neighbours. Find out if your “footprint” is causing stress or disruption of business. Work with them to ensure the noise levels are manageable and realistic for both parties. Be approachable. It is always preferable that they come to you with a complaint and give you an opportunity to fix it than to complain to the municipality.

# A17: DISPERSAL

**“Have a written dispersal policy.” (DESIRED)**

## **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“Staff are to ensure patrons leaving the premises do so without incident, and that they do not loiter outside.”

## **Relevant Legislation:**

- **AGLC LH 5.1.10:** "Last call" must be timed to ensure patrons who order liquor are served within the hours of liquor service specified on the licence.

## **Information to consider:**

- Consider developing procedure for staff to follow to ensure the policy is understood and followed.
- Your dispersal policy should apply to patrons as they leave the building, especially, but not limited to, the end of the night.
- Monitoring patrons outside the establishment and ensuring they are not causing trouble.
- Procedure could include the following:
  - Intervening with intoxicated patrons and ensuring they have safe transportation (find their acquaintances, call a taxi, prevent the risk of drunk driving, etc).
  - Supervising the exterior of the exits of your premises.
  - Walking female patrons to cars or rides.
  - Increased staff at coat check near the end of the night.
  - Thanking patrons on the way out (encouraging them to return by ensuring their final interaction with staff is positive).
- Links to other criteria, including: A9, A12.

# BONUS POLICY AND/OR PROCEDURE

## A18: PRESERVATION OF A CRIME SCENE

**“Clear written procedures are in place for determination and preservation of crime scene and witness details until police arrive.” (BONUS)**

***Note: Although policy is not required, it may assist you in developing your procedure.***

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“In order to assist with police investigation of a crime, staff are required to preserve the crime scene until police arrive by following this procedure: *(list steps staff are to take)*.”

### **Relevant Legislation:**

- **AGLC LH 12.1.10:** “The AGLC supports and encourages police ‘walk through’ programs. Every police officer is considered an Inspector under the GLA, and licensees and their staff are required to cooperate fully with police officers who enter the licensed premises.”

### **Information to Consider:**

- At a minimum, procedure should include the following:
  - Prevent patrons from walking through the area and disrupting evidence.
  - Identify possible witnesses and provide the information to police.
  - Don’t move or touch anything.
  - Be observant and make note of what you see and hear.
- Consider consulting with your local police regarding this procedure or development of related policy.
- Links to other criteria, including: A3.

## A19: USE OF SECURITY SCREENING EQUIPMENT (METAL DETECTORS, WANDS) AND PROCEDURES (PAT-DOWNS)

**“Have a written policy and procedure regarding the use of metal detectors, wands or pat-downs at the entrance of the premises.” (BONUS)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“Metal detecting wands and pat-downs are to be used by Security staff using approved procedure.”

### **Information to consider:**

- This criterion may apply only on certain nights or events; specify if that is the case.
- Pat-downs, metal detectors or wands are often employed at larger clubs or during busy events like live concerts in bars. They can help prevent patrons from carrying weapons or other unwanted contraband (liquor, illegal drugs) into your establishment. As well, bars that conduct these searches appear proactive to patrons. This can increase a patron’s sense of security and deter “unwanted” patrons from entering. Some owners fear that conducting searches at the door can offend patrons, turn them away or suggest that the room is unsafe enough to warrant these practices. Weigh the risks and determine if the practice is suitable to your needs.
- Consider consulting with local police for guidance in developing policy and to ensure your search policies and procedures are legal and respect both your rights as a business owner and service provider and the customer’s rights. Police may be able to provide guidance regarding handling contraband.
- Consider consulting with local police, legal counsel or security professionals to ensure security staff are properly trained to screen customers efficiently, tactfully and legally. Consider bringing in a trainer or consultant to provide guidance to staff.
- This policy builds on policy for criteria A10, and Links to other criteria, including: A2, A3, A6, A7, A11 and B12.

# ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED POLICY

*Though the following are not required to be written policy by Best Bar None, you may want to create policy or, and procedure for them and for other topics to reinforce their importance.*

## B9: ACCEPTABLE IDENTIFICATION

**“Staff are trained and aware of acceptable forms of identification as per the AGLC Licensee Handbook.” (ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“Staff must be able to confirm that patrons in this premises are 18 years of age or older. If patrons appear under the age of 25, staff must ask for an acceptable form of identification as per the AGLC Licensee Handbook.” *(List current acceptable forms of identification as per the Licensee Handbook, Section 5.5.)*

### **Relevant Legislation**

- **AGLC LH 5.5.1** “It is an offence under the GLA to sell or provide liquor to anyone under 18 years of age. Management and staff of a licensed premises are responsible to ensure liquor is not sold or provided to minors.”
- **AGLC LH 5.5.2** “No minor may enter a Class A Minors Prohibited licensed premises, or any other licensed premises where minors are prohibited, except as specified in Sections 5.5.13 & 5.5.14.”
- **AGLC LH 5.5.8** “Licensee staff are required to ask for proof of age whenever a person who appears to be under 25 years of age attempts to buy liquor or to enter a premises where minors are prohibited. If unsatisfied a person is at least 18 years of age, licensee staff must refuse entry or ask the person to leave.”
- **AGLC LH 5.5.19** “Identification should be carefully examined under good lighting and/or a black light should be used to ensure the:
  - a) photograph is a true likeness and has not been substituted;
  - b) the plastic laminate has not been tampered with; and
  - c) the lettering of the name, date of birth and other data have not been altered (lettering that has been altered will show up under a black light).
- **GLA Section 74(1)** “If a person who appears to be a minor attempts to purchase or be given liquor from a liquor licensee, the licensee or other person to whom the request is made must, before granting the request, demand that the person who appears to be a minor provide proof of age.”

## B15: FIRE SAFETY TRAINING

**“Provide documented evidence of staff receiving training in fire safety procedures; including use of fire extinguishers and other emergency equipment (i.e., escape ladders, fire exits, alarms, etc.).” (ESSENTIAL)**

### **Suggested Basic Policy:**

“Staff are required to be knowledgeable in the location and use of fire extinguishers and other emergency equipment.”

### **Information to consider:**

- Staff training in fire safety could include written instruction and/or practical training in fire evacuation drills, fire safety equipment use and fire prevention. Completion of training should be noted and somehow acknowledged by staff (e.g. initialed or signed).
- Consult with local fire department or private fire safety companies for advice or training resources, if required, to develop a comprehensive fire safety policy, or to verify bylaw requirements.
- Identify what fire safety equipment (e.g. fire extinguishers, pull stations, alarm panels, etc.) is available, where it is located and provide information or instruction on correct usage.
- Policy and procedure could include guidance for staff to prevent fire risk. This may include:
  - Awareness and identification of electrical hazards including faulty equipment, damaged power cords, lighting fixtures, etc.
  - Kitchen safety including knowledge of kitchen safety, maintenance of exhaust/hood fans, etc.
  - Supervision of exterior smoking area(s) should be done with fire safety in mind. Ashtrays can overheat and the contents can ignite.
  - Regular fire drills or evacuation drills.
  - “How To’ manuals for fire safety equipment.
- Consider making fire safety training part of new staff orientation.
- Links to other criteria, including: A4.