

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba	Policy:#:	PS - 481
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MUNICIPAL ALCOHOL POLICY (MAP)

POLICY STATEMENT

The Addictions Foundation of Manitoba supports the development and implementation of Municipal Alcohol Policy (MAP) that contributes to healthy lifestyles and options by individuals and communities.

AFM is committed to assisting communities in the development and implementation of a Municipal Alcohol Policy by providing alcohol information, policy development and implementation guidance.

CONTEXT

The AFM policy and associated information pertaining to Municipal Alcohol Policy are intended to assist communities in:

- Reducing the incidence of alcohol-related problems within the community.
- Lowering the risk of liability
- Increasing enjoyment of those using municipal facilities
- Increasing health and well-being of the community as a whole.

A Municipal Alcohol Policy (MAP) generally regulates the use of alcohol in municipally owned or regulated facilities and outdoor recreational areas where alcohol may be served under an occasional permit. However, when a MAP is developed beyond a legal liability and financial risk management perspective, by incorporating a health promotion/population health perspective, it can be used as the catalyst for creating an environment that promotes, and subsequently achieves, a reduction in harm caused by the use and/or abuse of alcohol. Ultimately enhancing community health and well-being.

A community=s initiative to develop and implement a MAP will show leadership and may lead to licensed establishments adopting alcohol policies which are similar to the municipality=s policy.

ISSUE

Legislation regarding alcohol consumption falls under the jurisdiction of the provincial government. However, local communities do have control over where and how alcohol is consumed in municipally owned facilities and property (eg. parks, beaches).

Alcohol abuse touches on legal/financial liability, safety, personal choice and the health of a community. If alcohol is consumed by an individual at an event which is held in municipal facilities or on municipal property, and someone is injured or killed by an individual who becomes intoxicated at the event, the municipality may be subject to liability action. This liability applies whether drinking was authorized (eg. occasional permit) or whether the drinking was not authorized (beach, park). Liability also applies to individuals (bush parties on their property), owners of licensed establishments. To this end, the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that servers of alcohol are liable not only for people who get drunk at their establishments, but also for people hurt by the intoxicated person after the intoxicated person leaves the establishment.

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While most civil liability cases tend to be directed at privately owned establishments like bars, municipalities are no longer exempt. The seriousness of problems associated with occasional permits and the threat of civil liability is leading municipalities to introduce a Municipal Alcohol Policy.

Generally events conducted under occasional permits are managed by untrained volunteers. As a result, problems such as: underage drinking, intoxication, rowdy behaviour/violence, fights, injuries, death and impaired driving occur. As such, the municipality that owns the facilities or property faces many risks associated with alcohol-related problems.

The implementation of a MAP addresses the consumption and responsible use of alcohol in municipally owned facilities and property. The ultimate goal is to encourage moderate, responsible consumption for those who choose to drink and reduce the incidence of alcohol-related problems.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- MAP development and implementation results in increased community awareness of alcohol related issues and influences social norms that contribute to drinking behaviour. As such, it is an important component in community substance abuse prevention and intervention strategies.
- Public participation in the development and implementation process increases the number of community members who willingly comply with the policy.
- While a MAP only controls alcohol use on municipal property, it can influence policy development by owners of bars, restaurants and private clubs, which is consistent with the municipal policy.
- Development and implementation of a MAP is a proactive effort in the prevention and reduction of alcohol-related problems.
- There can be many benefits to communities establishing a MAP, some which of include:
 - sets out clear guidelines on alcohol use and enforcement procedures.
 - establishes rules for appropriate alcohol consumption in municipal facilities and on municipal property.
 - promotes moderate, responsible consumption for those who choose to drink.
 - reduces alcohol-related occurrences/problems.
 - improves community health and well-being.
 - enhances community image
 - increases participation at community events by reducing alcohol related incidents
 - helps train event workers
- The acceptance of a MAP by Municipal Councils provides opportunities for educating community groups about alcohol issues in the context of both liability and public health.
- The impact of a Municipal Alcohol Policy is broad. Those affected by the policy include service clubs who hold events in community clubs and other municipal owned facilities; members of the public who want to hold a dance, wedding, outdoor barbeque, etc. in municipal facilities or on municipal property.

PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

- Municipal Council has to be in support of the development and implementation of a Municipal Alcohol Policy.
- A Municipal Alcohol Policy Development Team will need to be established. The policy should not be developed in isolation. By involving others and obtaining support from the Municipal government, the process facilitates ownership through public awareness, involvement and education of the community-at-large. This can assist in further community development initiatives regarding alcohol issues.
- The Team may consist of: volunteers, user groups, interested community members, municipal staff, local police, local liquor inspector and other MLCC staff, regional health care professionals, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba staff and any other representatives the municipality feels is integral to the development and implementation process.
- Local needs, conditions and circumstances need to be taken into account when developing a MAP.
- A MAP usually includes, but is not restricted to:
 - a list of facilities/areas eligible for alcohol use
 - a list of facilities/areas where alcohol use is prohibited
 - safe transportation strategies for those who do become intoxicated
 - event controls (eg. rules for drink ticket sales, number of drinks purchased at one time, number of workers required)
 - server training requirements
 - regulations for underage participants
 - provision of low alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks
 - food availability
 - type and amount of insurance to be taken out by rental/user groups
 - signage advertising availability of low and non-alcoholic beverages and food.
 - penalties for non-compliance/user accountability
 - restrictions on serving intoxicated persons
- The Manitoba Liquor Control Commission has occasional permit guidelines available, which address a number of the aforementioned issues.
- The benefits of the policy, including the will to protect the interests of both the municipality and its residents, should be broadly communicated.
- Public awareness and education of the MAP should be ongoing.