

## Evidence-Based Retail Server and Enforcement Practices

### Responsible Beverage Service Training

Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) programs main objectives are to develop and implement policies and procedures in retail establishments to prevent alcohol sales to minors and intoxicated persons and train managers, licensees and servers to use these policies effectively.

Early efficacy studies indicate that (RBS) training can change server behavior. Examples of efficacy studies are as follows:

- TIPS Evaluation: This study found that trained servers intervened more frequently at baseline and that the blood alcohol concentration level for pseudopatrons were lower for trained servers
- Navy Server Study: This study found that the proportion of intoxicated drinkers at the experimental Navy bar were cut in half whereas there was no change at the comparison site with no change in overall sales
- Thunder Bay, Ontario: This study found that trained servers scored higher in post testing while comparison sites did not change significantly

### How to Make Responsible Beverage Service Effective

RBS training can be effective in significantly reducing alcohol impairment and intoxication. However, training alone may not always be enough unless the training is mandated. An example of mandated training is the Oregon Server Training Law. In addition to training and mandates, incentives may also be used as an effective practice.

### Best Practices Approach to Responsible Beverage Service Practices

#### *5 Components of Effective RBS Practices*

- Training in all information relevant to servers-This includes the physiological effects of alcohol, its association with social problems and coverage of legal requirements.
- Training in behavioral change/communication techniques.
- Training for managers as well as servers.
- Development of management polices supportive of server practice.
- Four hour minimum duration for training.

Effective RBS is best achieved with random checks of training programs, random checks of licensees that are mandated by state law, and adequate enforcement staff to achieve random checks.

## **Enforcement Strategies to Encourage Responsible Beverage Service**

### ***Hillsborough County S.A.V.E. Program***

A good example of an enforcement strategy to encourage responsible beverage service is the Hillsborough County, FL S.A.V.E. (Sheriff's Alcohol Vendor Enforcement) Program. During 2000-2004 Hillsborough County was number one in the state of Florida for DUI related fatality and injury accidents (per capita). Hillsborough county was also number one for DUI arrests in 2007. Hillsborough county responded to this by creating the S.A.V.E. Program which is a partnership with vendors.

This new partnership with vendors creates a feeling of trust between vendors and law enforcement, provides a point of contact within law enforcement for the vendor as well as a point of contact with a business for law enforcement. This new approach also requires all deputies to ask people being arrested for DUI, "where did you come from?" and to gather information if an alcohol related event occurs on a vendors premise.

Components of the SAVE Program:

- Meets with alcohol vendors (owners and managers)
- Provides employee education
- Maintains contacts with vendors and acts as a liaison between Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office (HSCO) and the vendor
- Inspects licensed premises
- Instructs recruits in HSCO Academy and veteran officers on the S.A.V.E Program, fictitious licenses and how to conduct proper licensed premises checks
- Maintains contact with community groups such as the Tampa Alcohol Coalition (TAC) and MADD

As a result of this program, fatalities are down 77% from January 2007-July 2007 compared to January 2008-July 2008.

Programs can have incentives for participation in RBS, but not always. Each year as an incentive to Hillsborough county vendors a plaque is presented by the Sheriff to recognize the most responsible vendor.

### ***City of Oakland Park Ordinance-Merchant Education/Certification Program***

The City of Oakland Park in Broward County, FL provides a good example of how to develop a local ordinance to implement a merchant education/certification program.

The city's Merchant Education/Certification Program stresses that it is important when assessing and justifying the need to implement a city ordinance to reduce underage drinking that it be data driven and would address the following issues:

- How the Merchant education program would work
- Information on an application process/fee structure/criminal background check
- How the training of all retail vendors/operators would work
- How the vendor certification program would work
- Accreditation of establishments

The City of Oakland Park's Merchant Education/Certification Program includes a plan for Implementation/Evaluation of the Program, Penalties, and Recognition.

### **Implementation/Evaluation of Program**

This includes monitoring certification compliance through routine inspections and conducting alcohol sale compliance checks.

### **Penalties**

If a vendor is found to be non-compliant, fines for non-certification, criminal and administrative violations as well as loss of license to sell alcohol are penalties that may be imposed.

### **Recognition**

The Program understands that it is important to provide recognition to vendors and clerks that are compliant. Some of the recognitions being used by the Oakland Park Program are certifications, gift cards to clerks and inclusion in local publications regarding their compliance.

The Merchant Education/Certification Program main goals are to increase compliance rates, increase vendor awareness, improve quality of life and bring everyone to the table. It also recognizes that community support, and stakeholder partnerships, and maintained and consistent enforcement of the ordinance are integral to the overall success of the program.

## **REFERENCES**

This fact sheet is based on:

*The Evolution of Responsible Beverage Service as a Preventive Intervention, Bob Saltz, Prevention Research Center, Berkeley, CA*

*Hillsborough County Florida Sheriff's Office: Sheriff's Alcohol Vendors Enforcement Program*

*City of Oakland Park Ordinance-Merchant Education/Certification Program, Patrick Roberts, Florida Alcohol, Beverage and Tobacco*



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