

IIABA And Trusted Choice Party Host Liability Tips



In the midst of the festive and hectic holiday atmosphere, it is easy to forget the serious responsibility involved with hosting a party at home or business. In many states, individuals and employers hosting holiday parties can be held liable in cases where a guest or third party is injured in an accident related to alcohol consumption at your event. Hosts have been held responsible for medical bills, vehicle repair costs, lost time from work, and even wrongful death. Independent agents and brokers recommend that those planning to host holiday parties this year review their homeowners, renter's or comprehensive general liability (CGL) insurance policy and ensure they have adequate liability coverage if sued and found liable for the actions of a guest who drank at their home or business. While all holiday partygoers and hosts alike should be responsible and know their limits, consumers need to acknowledge that most risks cannot be eliminated entirely. But planning ahead and learning about what's involved in hosting a reception is the best defense.

Liability Coverage Tips:

- If hosting a holiday party, individuals should look to the liability portion of their homeowners or renters insurance policy to provide them protection if they are sued and found liable for an accident involving a guest who drank at their home. Ask a Trusted Choice agent if you are adequately covered.
- Employers need to make sure that their comprehensive general liability (CGL) policy provides them coverage for third-party liquor liability through a special purchase a separate liquor liability policy before hosting that holiday office party.
- Charging employees for alcoholic beverages in the home or office may not always be the best solution for business parties. It is important for businesses to remember that once they charge a fee for alcohol, they have technically entered the alcohol sales business, even if only one night. That carries with it requirements for a liquor license and an array of special liability protection needs. It by no means lets these employers off the hook.
- Purchasing a personal "umbrella" liability policy-can provide \$1 million or more in additional coverage over the limit offered by a standard homeowners or renters policy-may be a prudent move for the frequent party host. This type of coverage can cost as little as \$125 a year.



Party Host Safety Tips:

- Limit guest list to those you know.
- Provide filling food for guests and alternative non-alcoholic beverages.
- Schedule activities or entertainment not involving alcohol. If the party centers around drinking, it is likely that guests will drink more.
- Arrange transportation or overnight accommodations for those whose should not drive home.
- Stop serving alcohol will before the time the party is to end.
- Do not serve guests who are visibly intoxicated.
- Review your insurance policy with you agent before the event to ensure proper liability coverage.
- Consider hiring an off-duty police officer to discretely monitor guests' sobriety or handle any alcohol-related problems as guests leave.
- Stay alert yourself, always remembering your responsibilities as a host.