Greek Life

Social Event Planning

IS IT A CHAPTER EVENT?
If the answer is “yes” to any of the following questions, it is safe to assume it is a chapter event.

- Is the event hosted or planned by one or more members of the chapter and supported by the officers?
- Is the event financed by the chapter and/or being hosted on chapter property?
- Does the event have a theme?
- Are guests invited to the event by members of the organization?
- Is the event listed or advertised on the chapter’s social media accounts [e.g. Instagram, Twitter, etc.]?
- Is the event listed on a chapter calendar [public or private]?
- Will the event be announced at a chapter meeting?
- Will officers be in attendance?
- Will the event be mentioned over a chapter GroupMe?
- If guests were to describe the event, would the organization’s name be mentioned?

BEFORE THE EVENT
- Meet with venue staff to review organization’s event policy, expectations, etc.
- Identify potential risks associated with event and implement prevention strategy.
- Establish expectations for how members and guests will behave before, during, and after the event.
- Clearly communicate all expectations and consequences to members.
- Have plan in place for how poor behavior will be addressed during and following the event.
- Ensure members of risk management team will be committed to managing a safe and successful event.
- Reinforce that the event is not open to the public and cannot be advertised - if banner or public display is utilized, “invite only” language must be included.

SECURITY
- Utilize trained security guards who have passed a background check
- Ensure that the security staff is familiar with the organization’s guest list procedures.
- Ensure adequate number of security guards are on site.
- Identify a direct point of contact for all matters related to security.
- Assume in writing all the responsibilities that the security company will provide, including but not limited to:
  - Check identification cards upon entry against guest lists.
  - Manage all entry/exit points of the venue.
  - Manage additional locations, such as balcony, roof access, restroom area, etc.
  - Remove guests who are disrupting the event.
  - Prevent guests from leaving with alcohol.
  - Respond to any disruptions that take place at the event in conjunction with law authorities.
  - Conduct periodic sweeps of venue.

VENUE
- Identify potentially dangerous areas:
  - Access to high platforms or balcony.
  - Exit/Entry doors that should be monitored.
  - Satisfactory lighting inside and out.
- Maintain a copy of insurance proof with a minimum of $1,000,000 of general liability insurance.
- Do not allow venue/third party vendor to promote/advertise event.
- Know max capacity/fire code and ensure it is within the needs of event.
SOBER MONITORS
- Identify officer that will oversee sober monitors.
- Ensure sober monitors are trained on their responsibilities.
- Don’t utilize the sober monitor role as a punishment or sanction.
  - It is also recommended not to utilize the newest members, rather members who are most likely to be effective in the role.
  - Determine how sober monitors will be identified during event (bright shirt, uniformed clothing, etc.).
- Sober monitors agree not to consume alcohol before or during event.

ENVIRONMENT
- If the event is connected to a theme, be mindful of the potential for “fun” to become inappropriate/insensitive.
- Focus on a positive environment through theme decorations, activities, music, food, etc. - Focus should not be on alcohol.
- Set the tone by avoiding drinking games.
- If a pre-existing structure exists that may suggest/encourage drinking games, have it removed from the space or get creative and utilize it for a different purpose (decorations, coat rack, food display, etc.)
- Have snacks/food displayed in clear view.
- Have one or multiple water stations (depending on size of venue) set up that promotes easy access for guests.
- If event involves a band or DJ, arrange for special announcements to be made a few times throughout the event: shout out to sober monitors, Uber/Lyft rides, free food/water reminder, etc.
- If a pre-existing structure exists that may suggest/encourage drinking games, have it removed from the space or get creative!

DISTRIBUTION OF ALCOHOL
- Licensed third-party vendors.
- Chapter never provides alcohol.
- Bar provides customers with one drink at a time.
- Cash sales only.
- Negotiate drink options in advance with vendor.
  - If possible, remove sweeter/higher proof options from menu during event.
- No open bar or “drink specials.”
- Serve drinks in plastic cups—avoid glass.
- End alcohol sales 30 minutes prior to end of event.
- Do not allow guests to enter or exit the event with alcohol.
- Do not allow bar tabs.
- Use same cups for alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks.

UTILIZE RESOURCES
- Greek Life Office
  - Social event planning/risk prevention coaching.
  - Training for risk management team/exec.
  - Chapter-wide education
- National Organization
  - Policy education and resources.
  - Contract review
  - Insurance and legal liability assistance.

GUESTS
When deciding to host an event with alcohol, you assume responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of members, guests, AND non-guests if they freely gained entry.
- Create and utilize a legitimate guest list
  - Campus directory does not = guest list.
- Recommended number is two - three guests per member/ new member at your events. (The higher the number, the greater the risk).
  - Utilize number set by national organization if applicable.
- Finalize guest list at least 24 hours prior to event.
- Organize and track guest list by using an excel sheet or Google Doc.
- Create a spreadsheet and allow members to add guests’ names. Each member and new members’ name should be on the list next to a blank space for each guest they’re allowed to invite.
- Sort the finalized list alphabetically by the guest’s last name.
- Leave the member’s name next to the guests to identify who each individual is a guest of in the event of a problem.
- Utilize check-in and check-out system – a sheet that allows members to sign with time in and time out
- Utilize numbered invitations (example: wrist bands) – members distribute a wristband to those added to guest list – each number is connected to a specific member.
- Utilize specially made bands that are not easily duplicated

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Document adapted from the following sources: FIPG, Inc., Risk Management Foundation of Sigma Chi, and Holmes Murphy & Associates.