

Chapter 6

Beverage provision

Aim

To outline the key considerations for beverage provision within food service operations.

Objectives

This chapter is intended to support you in:

- Promoting safe, sensible drinking
- Identifying types of wine and drinks lists
- Developing wine and drink lists
- Pricing wine and drinks
- Developing skills in operating and managing the purchasing, storage and control of beverage stocks.

6.1 Safe, sensible drinking

There is increasing concern about higher levels of alcohol consumption and the health risks associated with it. Various initiatives are being tried such as improving information on labels, alcohol exclusion areas at certain times, restrictions on price promotions and also on licensing. Those who sell and serve alcoholic beverages, as well as being the subject of various licensing arrangements (see Chapter 1, page 27) are also being given far greater encouragement to become more responsible.

Most people drink alcohol, and for many reasons: to quench a thirst, as a relaxant or simply because it is enjoyable. A small amount of alcohol does no harm and can even be beneficial. However, the more you drink and the more frequently you drink, the greater the health risks.

Alcohol depresses the brain and nerve function, affecting a person's judgement, self-control and skills. The four general stages of becoming drunk are:

Stage 1: Happy (relaxed, talkative and sociable).

Stage 2: Excited (erratic and emotional; movement and thinking affected).

Stage 3: Confused (disorientated, loud, out of control).

Stage 4: Lethargic (unable to stand, talk or walk).

It is important that members of the service staff are aware of these stages so that potential problems can be identified and handled properly before they become more serious. This can include refusing to serve more alcohol to intoxicated persons, which is either required under the law or may be undertaken as a safety precaution – such as on aircraft.

Alcoholic strength

The two main scales of measurement of alcoholic strength may be summarised as:

- OIML Scale (European): range 0% to 100% alcohol by volume (ABV).
- American Scale (USA): range 0° to 200°.

The Organisation Internationale Métrologie Légale (OIML) Scale, previously called Gay-Lussac Scale, is directly equal to the percentage of alcohol by volume in the drink at 20°C. It is the universally accepted scale for the measurement of alcohol. Thus, a liquid measured as 40% alcohol by volume will have 40% of the contents as pure alcohol. Under the American scale, 80° (80 degrees proof) is equivalent to 40% alcohol by volume. The alcoholic content of drinks, by volume, must be shown on the label. Table 6.1 gives the approximate alcoholic strength of a variety of drinks

Table 6.1: Approximate alcoholic strength of drinks (OIML scale)

0%	Non-alcoholic
up to 0.05%	Alcohol free
0.05–0.5%	De-alcoholised
0.5–1.2%	Low alcohol
1.2–5.5%	Reduced alcohol
3–6%	Beer, cider, FABs* and 'alcopops'*** with any of these being up to 10%
8–15%	Wines, usually around 10–13%
14–22%	Fortified wines (liqueur wines) such as sherry and port, aromatised wines such as vermouth, vin doux naturels (such as Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise) and Sake***
37.5–45%	Spirits, usually at 40%
17–55%	Liqueurs, very wide range

Notes

* FABs is a term used to describe flavoured alcoholic beverages, for example, WKD (5.4%).

** Alcopops or RTDs (ready to drink) are used to describe manufactured flavoured drinks (generally sweet and fruity) which have had alcohol, such as gin, added to them. They are also known as alcoholic soft drinks or alcoholic lemonade. Usually 3.5 to 5% but can be up to 10%.

*** Sake is a strong (18%), slightly sweet drink made from fermented rice.