

Managing safety in pubs



Introduction

The pub, club and bar sector is vibrant, dynamic and continually changing to meet the needs and aspirations of its customers. The broad range of outlets, ranging from small traditional pubs, to large pub restaurants, hotels and nightclubs, play a vital role in the hospitality and leisure sector of the UK economy. Most venues trade to different customer requirements and occasions at different times of the week and throughout the day.

The industry operates in a highly regulated environment and through the licensing objectives must ensure the responsible operation of its premises at all times for customers, staff and the local community. A key priority of the industry is to ensure that both customers and staff feel secure, comfortable and safe in all licensed premises. There is also a duty of care to customers under health and safety law.

Unfortunately human nature dictates that there is a very small minority of people who have a propensity to resort to violence in certain situations or act in a way that elicits violence in others, which can occur in, or in the vicinity of, licensed premises. Violence and aggression can occur for any number of reasons, e.g. an individual could be annoyed or upset by someone, be seeking revenge or even be acting in self-defence. Bar staff and door supervisors might also be targeted whilst enforcing policies on under-age sales, drunkenness, smoking, refusing entry and closing time. The form of violence that might take place could involve pushing and the use of fists or improvised weapons such as bottles, glassware, pool cues and cutlery. In extreme cases customers may deliberately carry weapons with the deliberate intention to cause injury.

Regrettably incidences of violence do sometimes occur, but most disturbances or incidents are defused quickly and professionally by staff. In order to mitigate the menace of some individuals' behaviour towards staff or other customers, it is important that a full assessment of the risks from intentional violence is undertaken.

This guide seeks to set out the salient factors to be considered and to identify preventative measures that can be taken where appropriate. The risk assessment should be reviewed on a regular basis, particularly in the light of any incidents that do occur, and in any event to ensure that the assessment is kept up to date. The guide may also be used when preparing an operating schedule for a licence application or variation.

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Risk Factor

The following may be significant factors in the occurrence of violent incidents in pubs and other late-night venues:

- Social tension and rivalry (sporting, territorial)
- Frustration – waiting to get served
- Over-crowding and discomfort – pushing to the bar and lavatories
- Intolerance – bumping on dance floor/ busy area, spilled drinks
- Influence of drugs taken before entry
- Queues at the door and refused entry (ID checks)
- Staff (lack of intervention or too aggressive)
- Refusal to serve those under-age or drunk
- Removal of glasses with drinks remaining
- Failure to clear tables

Glassware

Glass can be an easily available improvised weapon in licensed premises. A risk-based approach should always be taken. The vast majority of pubs are well run and have no major problems with disorder but a small minority of people resort to violence and instigate attacks using the nearest weapon to hand which may be a glass or bottle (but, as noted above, more likely to be unarmed).

Flexible licensing hours have seen many pubs open for an extra hour or two after 11pm, mainly at weekends, and therefore a risk-based approach should be used to identify late-night premises where the use of polycarbonate “glasses” may reduce the risk of glass-related injuries.

Consideration in the risk assessment should be given to adopting the below, especially in late night venues. Glass litter can also cause injury to customers and the below can tackle this:

- Frequent collection of glasses/bottles
- Bottle banks in consumption areas
- Toughened glass
- Glass alternatives – some/ all areas, some /all hours (delete as applicable)
- Glass alternatives outdoor areas
- Glass alternatives special events
- Alternatives to glass bottles
- Decant products in glass bottles

Preventative measures

Existing premises should review their operating schedule on a regular basis to ensure the licensing objectives continue to be met. A number of preventative measures can be taken to assist in keeping premises secure and safe:

Design and Layout of Premises

Premises should be designed and planned to provide an environment that minimises opportunities for violence and disorder.

(See BBPA Guidance - Security in Design)

Increase staff awareness and training so they can work towards reducing risks

Staff Training

BIIAB Qualifications:

- Drug Awareness
- Award in Responsible Alcohol Retailing
- Award in Conflict Management
- Physical Intervention: Reducing Risk

Mystery Shopper programmes

CCTV cameras in operation and recordings saved

Radio links to other Pubwatch members

Industry guidance and good practice

Terrorism

Although terrorist attacks on bars, pubs and nightclubs in the UK have been infrequent recently, there is history of such attacks taking place.

It is possible that pub premises could be involved in a terrorist incident. This might include having to deal with a bomb threat or with suspect items left in or around your premises. In the worst case scenario your staff and customers could be killed or injured, and your premises destroyed or damaged in an attack. Whilst there is a need to maintain a friendly and welcoming atmosphere within bar, pub and nightclub - there is however a balance to be achieved where those responsible for security are informed that there are robust protective security measures available to mitigate against the threat of terrorism, e.g. protection from flying glass.

If in drawing up a risk assessment terrorism is considered to be a possible factor, the person responsible for day-to-day management of the premises (for example the DPS) should aim to produce a plan that has been fully exercised, and which is regularly audited to ensure that it is still current and workable.

Before you invest in additional security measures, review what is already in place, including known weaknesses such as blind spots in your CCTV system.

When creating your security plan, consider the following:

- details of all the protective security measures to be implemented, covering physical information and personnel security
- instructions on how to respond to a threat (e.g. telephone bomb threat)
- instructions on how to respond to the discovery of a suspicious item or event
- a search plan
- evacuation plans and details on securing your premises in the event of a full evacuation
- your business continuity plan
- a communications and media strategy which includes handling enquiries from concerned family and friends.

Assessing the risk

A key factor in assessing the level of risk is the profile of the business. Premises should continue to be assessed on a regular basis:

		Level of risk		
		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Location	Town Centre			
	Urban Community			
	Rural Community			
	Destination			
	Sports/Concert Arena near by			
	Leisure Complex			
Clientele	Families			
	Age profile 18-24			
	Students			
	Regulars / local			
	Out of town visitors			
	Predominantly female			
	Predominantly male			
	Mixed age and sex			
Offering	Energy levels			
	Music			
	Dance venue			
	TV Sports / Live Matches			
	Food – mix of trade			
	Cocktails/Wine			
	Traditional ales			
	Bottled beers and RTDs			
	Theme bar with promotions			
Layout and Design	Proportion of seating			
	Density – ratio of customers to space			
	Gardens			
	Patios/pavements			
Any previous violent incidents	Details of any incidents and subsequent action taken:			
INHERENT RISK LEVEL:		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW

Solutions

Indicate which of the following measures apply at the premises (✓)
 If they do not - indicate (*) where these might further enhance safety.

	✓ / *		✓ / *
Frequent collection of glasses/bottles		Bottle banks in consumption areas	
Toughened glass		Glass alternatives – some/ all areas, some /all hours (delete as applicable)	
Glass alternatives outdoor areas		Glass alternative special events	
Alternative material bottles		Decant products in glass bottles	
CCTV			
Door Supervisors		Table Service	
Challenge 21 policy		Refusal buttons	
Search on entry for drugs/other items		Food served until 11pm or beyond	
Implement BBPA promotions code		Staffing levels sufficient	
Frequent circulation by management		Soft drinks promotions	
Staff trained in conflict management		Dress code	
Experienced management		Dispersal policy	
Entry by ticket		Cool down music policy	
Toilet attendants/regular checks			
External smoking area		<u>Other:</u>	
Zero tolerance notices			
Point of sale material			
ID scanners			
Reduce opening hours (i.e. open later or close earlier)			

Summary

Further recommended action (See* on previous page)

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Signed: Date:.....

Date of Next Review:

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