WHERE’S THE LINE?

Understanding your role and responsibility in drinker intervention
This DVD has been produced by the Alcohol Advisory Council for the hospitality industry of New Zealand. It is recommended that all staff that work where alcohol is served to patrons read this book, watch the DVD and work through the site: www.wheresthelinel.org.nz

If it’s good for your customers then it’s definitely good for your business.
Intoxicated?

"Very few customers know that they are not permitted to become intoxicated on licensed premises."

TERRY LONG — FRANKLIN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Do you know when your customer have gone too far? Do you recognise the signs in your customers that tell you it’s time to intervene and give them a break?

The Sale of Liquor Act (1989) is very clear when it comes to the subject of intoxication. Those of you who have a Manager’s Certificate will know this.

To reiterate:

- **It’s illegal to serve alcohol to a person who is or has become intoxicated.**
- **It’s also illegal to let an intoxicated person onto a licensed premise.**
- **Finally, it is against the law to serve a patron in such a way that leads them to become intoxicated.**

This booklet, DVD and website ([www.wherestheline.org.nz](http://www.wherestheline.org.nz)) are designed to help you understand intoxication. They offer tools and tips to help you keep your customers safe, within the bounds of the law and to keep your environment safe for your patrons.
Gone too far?

Helping customers get the message

As part of this drive to help all licensed premises staff understand and act upon the law around intoxication a new series of on-site customer posters have been created.

There are three central ideas wrapped up in this communication:

1. *That’s the law* says just that to patrons. It is illegal to serve customers who are intoxicated. Underlying this statement is the sentiment that your premise stands by the law and does not tolerate unruly behaviour.

2. There are levels of intoxication and there are different responses – have a water at one end of the spectrum and time to go home at the other.

3. *Gone too far?* suggests that customers can get to a point where their drinking is no longer acceptable under the law.

These new customer posters (shown on pages 3-5) offer clear and slightly cheeky ideas of what intoxication means, and what you need to do about it.

There are a range of posters available from ALAC. Please choose the posters that are most appropriate for your venue.
WHERE'S THE LINE?

Poster 1

GONE TOO FAR?

TIME TO GO ON THE WATER, EAT SOME FOOD OR CALL A TAXI?

WE MUST PROVIDE ALL THESE THINGS FOR YOU.

THAT'S THE LAW!
WHERE’S THE LINE?

Poster 2

GONE TOO FAR?

RAT-FACED?

GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK.
TAKE A HINT, SLOW DOWN.
WE CANNOT SERVE RAT-FACED PATRONS.

THAT’S THE LAW!
WHERE’S THE LINE?

Poster 3

GONE TOO FAR?

INTOXICATED? THAT’S WHEN YOU’RE DRUNK, PISSED, MULLETED, MUNTED, TRASHED...

WHEN YOU’VE GONE TOO FAR WE HAVE TO TELL YOU.

THAT’S THE LAW!
Staff messages

The *Gone too far?* posters are there to give you a tool to help you communicate with patrons when they have gone too far.

Also remember that you need to be engaged with your patrons at all times (even in the biggest and busiest of bars). As a reminder a series of staff messages have been created.

What these communicate is that taking care of your customers is what a good host does as a matter of course.

Part of being a good host to your patrons is to ensure that they don’t break the law.

**Bar till stickers**

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**GOOD HOSTS**

**LOOK AFTER THEIR CUSTOMERS**

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**OFFER THAT LOUD MOUTH A WATER OR A SOFT DRINK AND SOME FOOD OR A TAXI!!**

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You get the idea?
What is intoxication?

“Intoxication isn’t one thing. There are degrees of intoxication and the point where you’re liable for prosecution is what we’ve all called drunk, pissed, mulleted, munted, trashed, shit-faced, hammered – whatever you want to call it.”

BARRY MCDONALD – CANTERBURY DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD

On the DVD and the website, intoxication and its physical and mental effects are simply and clearly defined.

There are four levels of intoxication:

1. **Loss of Inhibitions:** The happy phase
2. **Loss of Judgment:** The loud stage
3. **Loss of Reactions:** Swaying and slurring
4. **Loss of Coordination:** Fall over drunk

These are the phases of intoxication. When your patron starts to drink at the beginning of the night they experience quite quickly the euphoria associated with a loss of inhibitions.
1 **Loss of Inhibitions**
This loss of inhibitions is what most people are striving for as they take those first drinks. The loss of inhibitions allows customers to relax, socialise and generally have a good time – to feel happy.

2 **Loss of Judgment**
There is a fine line between the loss of inhibitions and the loss of judgment. It's a line that's different for every drinker and a lot of factors come into play to precipitate the transition. This is the stage that the drinker begins to enter a phase when they will experience regrets the next day and it's the stage when their behaviour can damage your business.

**THIS IS THE TIME TO INTERVENE!**

3 **Loss of Reactions**
Once a drinker loses their judgment if they continue to drink they will eventually begin to lose their reactions. This is when your patron begins to show the physical signs of intoxication.

4 **Loss of Coordination**
Finally, alcohol will attack the motor skills of the drinker. They begin to stumble, fall and knock into things.
“So you’re feeling pretty good after a couple of drinks. You theorise to yourself – look, if I’m feeling this good after a couple of drinks, imagine how good I’m going to feel after a couple more.”

BARRY MCDONALD – CANTERBURY DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD

“A typical thing that would happen with a loss of judgment is someone carrying on like an idiot, annoying other patrons – being belligerent, argumentative, using foul language.”

ROSS HENDERSON – WAIKATO DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD

“So we’re talking about slurred speech – we’re talking about failing to maintain eye contact – we’re talking about dropping change and so on – we’re talking about loss of reaction.”

ROSS HENDERSON – WAIKATO DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD

“We don’t want to see those people on licensed premises at all.”

ROSS HENDERSON – WAIKATO DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD
Managing intoxication

“Everyone knows that when they see someone when they’re intoxicated beyond the point of being allowed to drink anymore, I think it’s very easy. I think the hard thing for management and door staff is being able to identify those people early.”

NAERA PARATA – NEW ZEALAND POLICE

The DVD and website (www.wherestheline.org.nz) expand on the stages of intoxication and how the responsible licensed venue needs to react to each level.

If you refer to your Creating a Responsible Drinking Environment book you will encounter the Intoxication Prevention Tool on page 30 and on the page opposite in this booklet. This provides you with an excellent model for intervening at the right time to ensure a responsible drinking environment and to ensure you stay within the law.
Intoxication Prevention Tool
Helping you manage the responsible service of alcohol

The fundamental message that comes from those working across all facets of the liquor industry is that to manage intoxication on your premise requires a willingness to intervene early and a commonsense approach to recognising the signs of your patrons losing their judgment.

It is also the hospitality worker’s main legal requirement and obligation to their customers.

If a drinker is already at the stage of showing physical signs of intoxication then they should either no longer be on your premise or should not have been allowed into your venue in the first place – it’s that simple.
How to intervene

You can always throw it back on the Act and say – well, it’s illegal for us to serve you anymore. It’s not us. We’d like you to give us all your money if you want to, but we can’t do that. So you throw it back on the law. For the most part, people respect that.

BARRY FORSYTH, PUBLICAN

The website and the Responsible Service Guidelines aim to provide you with a set of tools to demonstrate the options you have for intervention.

Recognising the signs is the first step, being prepared to intervene is the second and actually taking action the third.

Please now take the time to look at the DVD and website.

Remember if it’s good for your customers it’s going to be good for your business.
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If it’s good for your customers then it’s definitely good for your business.

That’s Intoxicating
A DVD to help hospitality workers understand intoxication and find out how to help their customers drink within the law with dignity

"eXcuse Me sir, I think you’ve had enough"