Make your next house party a success

This brochure was made by students for students.
Our goal is to provide information to UW-River Falls students, so that your house parties are safe and fun. We will share some tips to reduce the dangers involved.

- Alcohol is a very serious issue on our campus.
- Alcohol is a powerful drug that can turn fun events into very dangerous situations. This drug has the ability to impair the thinking of individuals, which restricts their ability to make rational decisions.
- Alcohol can prevent people from using their good judgment, and following their values.

This guide shows ways that hosts of parties can create a safe, clean, fun, and welcoming party atmosphere.

**Safe partying guide**

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What is a house party?

The type of house party that we are referring to is a gathering of a large group of people who either were invited or just heard about the party. These types of events often involve loud music, alcohol, smoking, and cover charges.

The night may end with people leaving with people they do not know, vomiting, guests driving under the influence, possibly sexual assault, and/or people having too much to drink.

Remember: If a crime happens, such as an assault, the hosts could be liable for damages. The hosts can be cited after the fact for throwing the party, and may end up in court. This will still apply even if the hosts were not present when the crime took place. Off-campus misconduct can be reported to the University which can result in academic disciplinary action.
Common reasons your party was shut down

• You charged a cover (sold cups to your guests as they entered).
• You sold shots or mixed drinks.
• You served alcohol to minors.
• You served mixed sweet or fruity drinks and neither you nor your guests could keep track of the amount of alcohol consumed.
• You played drinking games.
• You publicized your party as an after-bar event.
• You had too many guests, and the noise got out of control.
• No one stayed sober to monitor.
• You kept your party an open event, and didn’t have a guest list.
• The amount of people kept growing and things got out of hand.
• There were fights or assaults and the police had to come.
• Public urination, defecation or vomiting attracted attention.
• Your guests did not know what was in their drinks. (Remember: Drinks poured from a common source could be tampered with.)
• You didn’t serve drinks in single-serve containers.
Party Checklist

Pre-party checklist
✓ Plan out your guest list.
✓ Invite guests but set event to private if using Facebook.
✓ Designate 1 sober host per 10 guests at the party to watch for alcohol poisoning, guest behavior, and stopping those who have drank too much from being served.
✓ Alert your neighbors about your party and give them contact information for one of you that will be sober so they call you first before they call the police.

The party
✓ Have one main entrance to enter the party, to make sure you only allow the guests you want.
✓ Lock doors to bedrooms and other private rooms where you don’t want people.
✓ Offer non-alcoholic drinks and snacks.
✓ Keep the party inside and not on our yard.
✓ Do not serve anyone under 21.
✓ Make sure sober hosts are where they are supposed to be during the party.
✓ Do not be afraid to call 911 if you notice someone is very drunk and you suspect alcohol poisoning.
✓ Help your guests get home safely by having designated drivers available or local sober cab transportation.

After the party
✓ Clean up any trash outside on your property or your neighbors.
Fights and sexual assault

Alcohol is the number one used date rape drug and severely impedes judgment and can cause people to do things that they normally would not do under other circumstances. When people are under the influence of alcohol or any other drug, there is an increased risk of sexual assault and fighting.

Ways to reduce assault risks:

- **Offer non-alcoholic** beverages and food to guests.
- **Take frequent walks** around the outside of the house. Monitor the noise level and the way the house looks from the outside. If there are any people standing around, send them back into the house. Also, respect your neighbor’s property by picking up trash.
- **Keep an eye** on people who seem to be getting into a heated situation. It is your house, so don’t be afraid to escort them out or step in if needed. You can always have a group of friends help you in a tough situation.
- **Monitor your guests** as they come in, or have a list. Although you can not remember everyone’s face, you will have a good idea of people who arrived together.
- **Find a volunteer** to stay sober who can escort or drive others home. This will help prevent guests from driving drunk, going home with people they don’t know, or putting themselves in dangerous situations. Also check with guests leaving that they told their friends, so their friends won’t be searching for them later.
- **Alert your neighbors** that you are planning to have a party. Most people understand that you are a college student, and appreciate the advanced warning. This is also a good way to show respect for the people who live around you, and encourages them to speak with you before calling the police.
Property damage and theft

It is your house, so you should protect it. If you are renting, you could be charged for any damages that occur during your party. You could also be evicted from the residence for hosting a party.

Ways to reduce theft/damage risks:

• **Lock all doors.** This includes bedrooms, closets, bathrooms, and the garage. Make sure the lock is secure. Also, close off sections of your house that you do not want guests to be in.

• **Secure storage areas** such as cabinets, refrigerators, and drawers. You can use duct tape to deter people from getting into your belongings. It is also a good idea to clear off bathroom shelves and other potentially harmful items.

• **Cover or protect areas** that could be tampered with. The fuse box, hot water heater, and furnace are all things that you don’t want your guests to be messing with.

• **Clear all bulletin boards, counter tops, and desks** of mail or personal items. This will lessen the risk of people being tempted to help themselves to your things.

• **Do not allow smoking** in the house. Have people who want to smoke go outside, in the backyard. Make certain that those people are being monitored by one of the hosts.

• **Always have at least one host stay sober.** This person needs to watch the door, events outside, and check the locks.
Avoiding a police visit

The most common reasons the police show up at a house party:

- **Noise complaints** - the neighbors calling the police
- **Party Noise** - people yelling, loud music playing
- **Fights and Disturbances**
- **People gathering outside** - drinking on the lawn or porch, people standing in the street.
- **Public urination, defecation or vomiting** - on parked cars, the street, or houses
- **Destruction of property** - private or public, theft, vandalism, arson.
- **Pulling of fire alarms** - generally in apartments.

Monitor, monitor, monitor!

The best way to make sure things stay under control is to stay sober, and monitor your party. The more people you have that are sober and checking on guests, the better your chances of having a safe party.
What to do if the police come

• **Don’t run away or lock the doors.** Have a host come outside and speak with the officers. Refusing to answer the door will not avoid a citation, as you can be cited after the fact.

• **Stop the music.** Calm guests down and make it known that the police are here for the hosts.

• **Find the most sober and coherent host to talk with the officers.** Being aggressive, uncontrollable, or uncooperative could only make the situation worse.

• **Attend your court date** if issued a citation.
What can happen if your party gets busted

Off-campus fines:

• Failure to prevent consumption by minors (by hosts): $313.00 per minor.
• Public urination, defecation, and vomiting: $124.00.
• Possession of marijuana (1st offense, over 17): $187.00. Same goes for paraphernalia.
• Damage to property: $250.00 plus restitution.
• False ID (first offense): $187.00.
• Disorderly Conduct: $187.00.
• Loitering on premise: $376.00.
• Loud and unnecessary noise: $124.00.
• Battery (if just minor including black eye or cut lip): $376.00.
• Battery (if more serious, broken tooth, serious injury): Class I felony; fine not more than $10,000.00 or imprisonment not to exceed 3 years and 6 months or both.

• Underage Consumption:
  First offense: $187.00.
  Second offense: $313.00.
  Third offense: $439.00.
  Fourth and above offense: $691.00.

• Providing alcohol to underage persons: $313.00.
  Hosts may also be fined and/or kicked out of their house or apartment by their landlord. Your record will show your convictions for five years, and your license could be suspended.

* Fines Subject to Change
Blood Alcohol Limit

The legal blood alcohol limit, for those 21 and over, in both Wisconsin and Minnesota is .08 while driving a motor vehicle. If you are under 21 and consuming alcohol anything above a .00 is illegal (unless you are with your parent or spouse who would be over 21). If you are driving and above a .00 and under 21- this falls under the absolute sobriety law and further penalties apply.

Conclusion

Hopefully this guide has given you some ideas to make your next party a little safer. Parties can be high risk situations. As a result much of the liability is placed on the hosts. The intent of the guide is to simply make parties a little safer for everyone involved. If there is a crime call the River Falls Police Department at: (715) 425-0909

If you have questions, please contact:
Career, Counseling & Student Health Services
211 Hagestad Hall
(715) 425-3884
www.uwrf.edu/studenthealthandcounseling
Counseling Services are available for currently enrolled UWRF students. Services are confidential, free, and provided by professional staff. Individual counseling is provided by four on-campus counselors, located in the Career, Counseling & Student Health Services at 211 Hagestad Hall (715-425-3884). Students may call to schedule an appointment. For more information check out www.uwrf.edu/studenthealthandcounseling

Alcohol and other drug assessments are available (a fee is charged if the assessment is required as part of a court or other sanctions) for UWRF students through UWRF Counseling Services. Students also have E-CHUG available, it is a short online survey that provides you with an accurate, detailed assessment of your alcohol use. For more information visit: www.uwrf.edu/studenthealthandcounseling

Student Health and Counseling Services
211 Hagestad Hall
410 South 3rd Street
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715-425-3293
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