

Creating safer drinking environments.

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Abstract

This chapter focuses on violence and crime in the licensed drinking environment (LDE). The authors argue that creating safer LDEs is primarily a regulatory problem, but that formal enforcement alone is not enough and there should be interaction of formal regulation, informal regulation, community mobilization, and self-regulation. Regulatory systems must reduce risk factors in the LDE that are related primarily to management practices and hidden deals between licensees and regulators. Effective regulation will ensure that the LDE environment is attractive and promotes appropriate behavior by not being crowded, excessively noisy, hot, or smoky; by minimizing provocation related to forms of entertainment; and by making non-salty food freely available. There should be clear limits on sexual and other behaviors, discouragement of drinking to intoxication, employment of trained, peace-loving security and bar staff, and exclusion of people who are regularly aggressive. There is limited evidence that visible, random checks on licensees, as well as undercover policing, can be effective. Evidence is consistent that mobilizing community groups and agencies can produce major reductions in aggression and violence in and around LDEs. Approaches available to regulators include licensing provisions; policy development; cooperation with the industry to develop standards; developing formal and informal codes of practice; education, publicity, and information campaigns; incentives for responsible operators; and working with the community. Copyright 2001, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

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