



# NEWS

A NEWSLETTER FROM SMART SERVE ONTARIO, TRAINING RESPONSIBLE BEVERAGE SERVERS

October  
2007

## Smart Serve Training is mandatory

The government recently announced that all liquor licensees and their managers, servers and security staff will require Smart Serve training and certification by January 1, 2008.

Any new staff hired closer to the January 1st deadline and afterward will have 60 days from their date of hire to get their Smart Serve.

The AGCO points out that, "The responsible service and delivery of liquor is a primary tenet of the LLA and server training is beneficial for all licensees. Mandatory server training emphasizes the importance of responsible liquor service and teaches staff about Ontario's liquor laws, recognizing the signs of intoxication and implementing appropriate policies."

Smart Serve is the only server training program approved by the Board of the AGCO. In its announcement, the AGCO says that the 60-day period for new employees to receive Smart Serve training was set to ensure employees are properly trained in responsible service in a reasonable amount of time.

Be sure that you and your staff have successfully completed the Smart Serve Responsible Alcohol Beverage Service Training Program by January 1, 2008. Training material can be ordered using the order form, or on our website. Two methods of training are available -- video/workbook or online through the Smart Serve website.

## We're updating our training program

The Smart Serve Responsible Alcohol Beverage Service Training Program is now being updated. We have reviewed, and listened to the many suggestions and comments from participants who have taken the training. An advisory committee has been set up to review the program during the updating process.

We will update the presentation of the information on the video, (which will be in a DVD format) as well as in the workbook. In addition to the important and necessary content in the present program, the new material covered will include:

- Changes to the LLA and Regulations
- More interactive exercises
- Best practices – learn from others
- Information and issues that reflect today's environment

The target date for the launch of the updated program is early January 2008.

Anyone who has purchased the training package in 2007 will be able to exchange all videos and unused workbooks/tests at no cost, so there is no reason to delay training your staff. The deadline for mandatory training is January 1, 2008. Training material purchased before 2007 will be exchanged at a low cost. Detailed information on the exchange program will be available at a later date.

## Writing the Smart Serve test does not guarantee a certificate

Smart Serve is conducting random spot checks on tests. This includes the online test as well as the paper test. The purpose of the auditing is to evaluate the effectiveness of the training and to ensure that staff have a grasp of the material in the Smart Serve training program. Randomly selected participants are contacted for an over-the-phone audit. If we suspect any irregularities, or the participant is unable to answer questions relating to the material in the program, they may be denied their certificate.

Anyone who does not return our calls within the specified time frame will also be denied their certificate.

In July and August, 250 tests were audited, and 10% were denied certification.



# AGCO Info you should know:

## *Bring signage up to date*

It's been nine years since the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario and the Ontario Gaming Control Commission were dissolved and became the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO). Therefore, the sign "Licensed by the LLBO" no longer applies. The sign should be removed, and although it is not compulsory to replace the signage, if you choose to replace the sign, it should read "Licensed by the AGCO".

## *LLA and AGCO changes in effect*

As of July 1, 2007, the following changes to the LLA and the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act have come into effect. These include provisions for:

- Enhancing the investigative authority of the Registrar of Alcohol and Gaming to investigate the associates of liquor licence applicants to ensure that the applicant is the true operator of the establishment;
- Targeting AGCO resources toward licensing, monitoring and investigating high-risk establishments in order to ease administrative burdens for low risk operators;
- Introducing penalties for minor violations of the LLA, and the fines collected would be used for public education purposes.

## *Manufacturers "By the Glass" Sales*

The AGCO will now accept applications from Ontario wineries and breweries for a Manufacturer's Limited Liquor Sales Licence to allow them to sell and serve their wine and beer to patrons in single servings at their manufacturing site. This move is designed to support Ontario tourism by providing wineries and breweries with an added means to educate guests about their products.

## *New name for "Brew on Premise"*

Premises where equipment is provided to individuals for the making of beer or wine have been renamed "ferment on premise facilities". This is a regulatory change that does not require any action by licensees. The AGCO says the name change is meant to better reflect the current makeup of licensees who fall under this particular category.

Also, the AGCO has eliminated the three-month grace period for renewal of (brew) ferment on premise licences. Licensees are now required to submit their licence renewal applications before the expiry date of their licence.

## *Liquor Delivery Services*

On and after January 1, 2008 liquor delivery licence holders must ensure that managers and persons involved with taking liquor orders and/or supplying liquor to customers, hold a certificate demonstrating the successful completion of a server training course approved by the Board of the AGCO within 60 days after being hired.

**For more on these and other changes relevant to the AGCO and LLA regulations, please go to the AGCO website at [agco.on.ca](http://agco.on.ca).**

## Certification cards:

To date, over 600,000 individuals involved in the sale or service of alcohol beverages have taken the Smart Serve Responsible Alcohol Beverage Service Training Program. Everyone who passes the test receives a Smart Serve certification card and number. It is important for employers to keep a list of those certification numbers in a safe place on the premises.

It is also important for individuals to keep their Smart Serve card with them in case an AGCO inspector or police officer needs to see it. We are no longer able to provide the certificate number over the phone. If a replacement card is needed, visit our website for the order form.

**proof  
you've  
passed  
the  
test**

## Did you know?

The American Council on Exercise (ACE) conducted a survey about on-the-job physical activity of 10 common jobs. They found that restaurant servers were third highest of all the professions in the number of steps taken during their workday. Servers logged about 10,000 steps a day compared to custodians who walked about 12,000 and mail carriers who put in about 18,000.

Each participant wore a pedometer on the job for three days, and kept a log of their activities.

# Teamwork works for this convention centre

## At the Metro Toronto Convention Centre,

managing responsible service of alcohol is a team effort that involves not only managers and staff, but the labour union and clients. When you have events with thousands of guests, it's important that every member of the team is reading from the same page. That's the bottom line for Karen Wood, the MTCC's Manager of Human Resources.

"Smart Serve plays a huge role in the Convention Centre's overall approach to managing the legal liabilities to alcohol service," she says. "We certainly apply a team approach. It's not just our banquet department's responsibility to manage alcohol service here. It's not just the server who's responsible. It's the entire organization."

And that includes the labour union. "We are a unionized environment, and our union also recognizes how important it is to manage our liabilities. For instance, many of our employees pick up extra hours working in departments other than their usual areas at the Convention Centre. In our collective agreement we don't allow employees to pick up extra hours in beverage service because we don't want someone working in beverage service who just serves drinks once in a while. We want them to be regularly using the Smart Serve principles."

Karen points out that they don't hire any bar staff unless they already have their Smart Serve certification, even though they will get more in-house training after they're hired. "We also give preference when



hiring wait staff to those who already have their Smart Serve training.

"We do all our training in house, and we use the Smart Serve training videos with an instructor, who could be one of our banquet managers or an HR person. We do our training on paid time; that's how important we think it is. We are willing to invest the time and money to make sure people go through the program and have the appropriate training."

Every manager and supervisor in the banquet department is Smart Serve trained. Bar staff, wait staff, drink ticket sellers and security staff are also trained. "We even go through the formal re-certification process every five years minimum, and on a refresher basis, it can be more often than that. We've been doing re-certifications for a few years now. Steven Scott Campbell, our Director of Banquet Services, feels our training is really critical to our success in managing alcohol service in such a large environment as we have."

One of the key elements of success is communication. So, before a function begins, managers remind staff of policies and the importance of the Smart Serve principles. "For instance, we have a policy that we don't serve doubles. We also don't allow guests to order a round of drinks for their table."

Supervisors on the floor play a key role because they support staff, either in helping identify guests who are having issues, or in supporting them when they are trying to enforce the Smart Serve principles.

Karen says clients, who host the events, take alcohol management seriously too, and some of them have their own very strict policies.

"Staff know that when a situation comes up that we will support them. So they will discretely identify to a supervisor that there is a situation on the floor. While the people attending events here are our customers, they are first and foremost our client's customers. So there is always a very

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# Snowmobilers are drivers too



Statistics show that alcohol is involved in 70% of all fatal snowmobile accidents. Therefore, staff at bars and restaurants in snowmobile country should practice the same responsible alcohol beverage service to snowmobiling customers as they do to car-driving customers.

Leta Elsner, Safety/Public Education Coordinator for the Ontario of Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, says her organization has a zero tolerance policy with respect to driving while operating a snowmobile. "Even small amounts of alcohol can impair your perception, slow your reaction time and limit your ability to control your sled at that critical moment when your life is in the balance," she points out. She also notes that snowmobilers convicted of impaired driving under the Criminal Code of Canada, face serious penalties, including going to jail, losing their licence, and their snowmobile, car/truck and trailer.

In the OFSC safety program, called "Take It Easy", snowmobilers are warned about the dangers of even one or two drinks. "Alcohol just makes you try dumb things that could get you or someone else injured or killed," the program points out. It urges snowmobilers to make the "smart choice" and not drink and drive.

There are more than 150,000 snowmobile enthusiasts in Ontario and they generate more than \$1 billion a year in economic activity, a large amount of that in the hospitality industry.

## Pass it on

This newsletter is for everyone at your establishment. Please pass it on or post it so that employees can read it. If you need extra copies, let us know. If you would prefer to receive this newsletter via email, we can do that too. To reach us, see the contact information below.

# Teamwork works for this convention centre

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delicate balance when approaching a situation where someone is reaching their limit. Typically we will involve our client contact to let them know there is a difficulty with one of their guests. At that point it will be addressed with the guest. Some clients prefer to deal with the individual directly. Other times they will instruct us to deal with it. Sometimes, depending on the nature of the problem, our security team will be involved."

The Convention Centre hosts a wide variety of events serving from 10 to tens of thousands of guests during their stay, and frequently with multiple bars spread out around multiple locations in the two million square foot building. With that many locations, it's impossible to know how many drinks an individual might have had. "That's why knowing the signs of intoxication and having good judgment are so important for all our staff, including the ticket sellers.

"In most cases, people don't plan to go out and get intoxicated, but sometimes guests go from being okay to not being okay. So managing people with discretion and dignity is important to what we do. Even if someone were to get to that point, we would want them to still feel that they were provided with excellent customer service, and that they felt they were cared for. The reality is that how we manage the situation could mean the difference between life and death."



This newsletter is published by Smart Serve® Ontario. Contact us at:

**Smart Serve® Ontario**  
5405 Eglinton Ave. W.  
Suite 106  
Toronto, ON  
M9C 5K6

Phone: 416-695-8737  
Fax: 416-695-0684  
Toll Free: 1-877-620-6082  
E-Mail: [general@smartserve.ca](mailto:general@smartserve.ca)  
Web Site: [www.smartserve.ca](http://www.smartserve.ca)