Aim

To outline the key considerations for beverage provision within food service operations.

Objectives

This chapter is intended to support you in:

- Promoting safe, sensible drinking
- Identifying types of wine and drinks lists
- Developing wine, drink and other beverage lists
- Developing skills in operating and managing the purchasing, storage and control of beverage stocks.

6.1 Safe, sensible drinking

There is increasing concern about higher levels of alcohol consumption and the health risks associated with it. Various initiatives are being tried such as improving information on labels, alcohol exclusion areas at certain times, restrictions on price promotions and also on licensing. Those who sell and serve alcoholic beverages, as well as being the subject of various licensing arrangements (see Chapter 1, page 24) are also being giving far greater encouragement to become more responsible.
The majority of the population drink alcohol for many reasons: to quench a thirst, as a relaxant or simply because it is enjoyable. A small amount of alcohol does no harm and can even be beneficial. However, the more you drink and the more frequently you drink, the greater the health risks.

Alcohol depresses the brain and nerve function, affecting a person’s judgement, self-control and skills. The four general stages of becoming drunk are:

- **Stage 1**: Happy (relaxed, talkative and sociable).
- **Stage 2**: Excited (erratic and emotional; movement and thinking affected).
- **Stage 3**: Confused (disorientated, loud, out of control).
- **Stage 4**: Lethargic (unable to stand, talk or walk).

It is important that members of the service staff are aware of these stages so that potential problems can be identified and handled properly before they become more serious. This can include refusing to serve more alcohol to intoxicated persons, which is either required under the law or may be undertaken as a safety precaution – such as with people on aircraft.

**Alcoholic strength**

The two main scales of measurement of alcoholic strength may be summarised as:
- **OIML Scale** (European): range 0% to 100% alcohol by volume (ABV).
- **American Scale** (USA): range 0° to 200°.

The Organisation Internationale Métrologie Légale (OIML) Scale, previously called Gay Lussac Scale, is equal to the percentage of alcohol by volume in the drink at 20°C. It is the universally accepted scale for the measurement of alcohol.

**Table 6.1: Approximate alcoholic strength of drinks (OIML scale)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Non-alcoholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not more than 0.05%</td>
<td>Alcohol free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.05–0.5%</td>
<td>De-alcoholised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5–1.2%</td>
<td>Low alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2–5.5%</td>
<td>Reduced alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–6%</td>
<td>Beer, cider, FABs* and ‘alcopops’** with any of these being up to 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–15%</td>
<td>Wines, usually around 10–13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14–22%</td>
<td>Fortified wines (liqueur wines) such as sherry and port, aromatised wines such as vermouth, vin doux naturels (such as Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise) and Sake***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.5–45%</td>
<td>Spirits, usually at 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17–55%</td>
<td>Liqueurs, very wide range</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

* FABs is a term used to describe flavoured alcoholic beverages, for example, Bacardi Breezer (5.4%).
** ‘Alcopops’ is a term used to describe manufactured flavoured drinks (generally sweet and fruity) which have had alcohol, such as gin, added to them. They are also known as alcoholic soft drinks or alcoholic lemonade. Usually 3.5 to 5% but can be up to 10%.
*** Sake is a strong (18%), slightly sweet, form of beer made from fermented rice.
The by volume measurement indicates the amount of pure alcohol in a liquid. Thus, in a liquid measured as 40% alcohol by volume, 40% of the contents will be pure alcohol. (Under the American Scale 80° (80 degrees proof) is equal to 40% ABV). The alcoholic content of drinks, by volume, is now almost always shown on the label. Table 6.1 gives the approximate alcoholic strength of a variety of drinks

**Sensible limits**

Most of the alcohol consumed passes into the bloodstream from where it is rapidly absorbed. This absorption may be slowed down somewhat if drink is accompanied by food but the amount of alcohol consumed will be the same. The liver must then burn up almost all the alcohol consumed, with the remainder being disposed of in urine or perspiration. It takes approximately one hour for the liver to burn up one unit of alcohol; if it has to deal with too much alcohol over a number of years, it will inevitably suffer damage.

So what are the sensible limits to avoid damaging our health? Of course, not drinking alcohol cuts out any risk. However, medical opinion in the United Kingdom, in 2016, has set the limit at 14 units spread throughout the week for men and for women (excluding pregnant women where the advice is for no alcohol). Drinking in excess of these limits is likely to be damaging to health.

One unit of is equal to 10 millilitres (liquid) or 8 grams (weight) of alcohol. This is roughly equivalent to:

- Half a pint of ordinary beer or lager
- One glass of wine (125 ml)
- One glass of sherry (50 ml)
- One measure of vermouth or other apéritif (50 ml)
- One measure of spirits (25 ml).

However, it is also important to take into account:

- There are about 100 calories in a single unit of alcohol. The amount of calories quickly adds up and can lead to weight gain. However replacing food with alcohol as a source of calories denies the body essential nutrients and vitamins.
- The number of units required to reach the maximum permitted levels for driving varies between individuals. Some alcohol remains in the bloodstream for up to 18 hours after consumption. This should be considered in relation to the legal limits for alcohol in the blood when driving. The legal limit in the UK is currently 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood or 35 micrograms per 100 millilitres of breath.

**Calculating alcohol intake**

The amount of alcohol being consumed is a measure of both the strength of the alcoholic drink and the amount or volume of the drink being consumed.
To calculate the alcohol unit intake for wines:

Wine at a specific percentage of alcohol by volume multiplied by the amount in litres equals the units of alcohol per bottle. For example:

Wine at 12% alcohol by volume × 0.75 litre bottle = 9 units per 0.75 cl bottle.

Therefore this 75 cl bottle of wine will give 6 × 125 ml individual glasses of wine and each glass will therefore contain 1.5 units of alcohol (9 units in the whole bottle divided by the 6 glasses).

Other examples for calculating the alcohol unit intake for other drinks are:

Lager at 5% alcohol by volume × 0.50 litre measure = 2.5 units per measure.

Spirit at 40% alcohol by volume × 0.025 litre (25 ml) measure = 1 unit per measure.

Sherry at 18% alcohol by volume × 0.05 litre (50 ml) measure = 0.9 unit per measure.

(For further information on safe sensible drinking visit the Drink Aware website at www.drinkaware.co.uk)

### 6.2 Types of wine and drink lists

Wine and drinks lists are primarily a selling aid. The lists identify for the customer what is on offer, the price of the item and details such as the measure in which the item is to be sold.

As a general rule, all menu items should have pairing wines and other beverages identified. Staff will then be able to make recommendations as required and promote wine and other beverage sales. In order to do this the service staff should have a good knowledge of wines or other drinks that are most suitable to pair with different foods. The service staff should also have a good knowledge of all the wines and other drinks available and their main characteristics.

### Bar and cocktail lists

These may range from a basic standard list offering common everyday apéritifs, a selection of spirits with mixers, beers, wines by the glass and soft drinks together with a limited range of cocktails and non-alcoholic cocktails (often called mocktails), to a very comprehensive list offering a wide choice in all areas.

When setting up a cocktail bar or preparing a bar and cocktail list, it is necessary to consider the availability of the specialised equipment, preparation requirements and stocks which are necessary for presentation including specialised glassware and garnishes, etc. Additionally in order to profit from yield management techniques, it is imperative that the majority of beverages have standard recipes and measures.