

# **CAMRA Health, Safety and Compliance Handbook**



**February 2026**



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## Beer Festival Roles and Responsibilities

This page should be updated to identify roles and responsibilities for the specific festival.

Beer festival organiser	
Safety coordinator	
Site manager (if applicable)	
Staffing officer / manager	
How/where volunteers can find copies of the festival risk assessments	
Person responsible for ensuring volunteers receive an adequate induction	
First aid provision Your festival first aiders are:  You can first aid boxes at these locations	
How to report accidents, incidents or near misses	

# The Purpose of this Handbook

Thank you for volunteering. Without people like you, these events could never be held. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us, and we look forward to seeing you at many more events in future.

Whether this is the first time that you have worked one of our festivals or you have volunteered at dozens of festivals all over the country, it is important that you are aware of these guidelines and that they are correctly implemented – we simply can't hope that nothing will go wrong just because 'we have always done it this way'.

Our festivals operate in highly regulated environments with a whole host of health & safety, licensing, fire and food safety regulations to adhere to/work within.

This booklet is intended to help ensure that everyone, from volunteers to our beer festival customers, have a great time and go home safe.

This booklet is split into two parts:

- The first covers general health and safety considerations of working at a CAMRA festival, such as manual handling, fire safety, etc.
- The second part covers general food hygiene, allergens and licensing requirements.

## Health and Safety

### Your responsibilities

As volunteers, you have several health and safety "duties" mainly being to:

- Take reasonable care of your own and others' health and safety.
- Only use any equipment given to you, as you have been trained/instructed to do so
- Cooperate on health and safety matters.
- To tell someone (festival organiser or safety officer) if you think that something is wrong!

## CAMRA Organisers' Responsibilities

Each CAMRA festival prepares a health and safety package. This includes a festival-specific risk assessment – this and other key information should be available on site for you to view.

Whichever phase of the festival you're working in, before you start work, the Organiser or Safety Officer will need to go through some specific information relevant to the event, including the main hazards and the controls in place for the specific festival.

The table at the front of this booklet should be completed, identifying key people at the festival.

**Nationally CAMRA has a responsibility to** all volunteers, contractors and members of the public. How we go about meeting these responsibilities is detailed in our health and safety policy, which can be found by scanning the QR below or by visiting the member's website: <https://members.camra.org.uk/volunteers-area/festival-hub/operational/health-and-safety/>



## National health and safety advice

If you think something isn't right at your festival or key documents such as risk assessments haven't been shared (or are incomplete, etc.), you can contact CAMRA's national health, safety and compliance advisor on 03330 431 802 or via email: [martin.cross@camra.org](mailto:martin.cross@camra.org).

## External Health and Safety Advice and Information

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have produced a handy *"what your organisation should do"* guide. You can view this by scanning the QR code opposite or by going to this website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/law.pdf>



## Housekeeping

Slips and trips are the most significant cause of accidents in the workplace (yes, you're volunteering, but it's still technically a workplace!)

While festivals are being set up or in the middle of a busy session, it might not seem like a priority to take a minute to put something in the waste in the bin or to move a pallet or a box of equipment out of the way.

However, even simple actions can significantly reduce the likelihood of a trip.

Inevitably, liquids will get spilt at some point during a festival, whether that's while filling coolers with water, leaks during tapping and venting of casks, or the adult equivalent of losing a balloon (a dropped pint!).



However, if the liquid gets on the floor, we should try to deal with it as quickly as possible – NB Putting up a wet floor sign does not deal with the issue.

## Fire Safety

You've probably heard the adage that prevention is better than the cure. Well, that is most certainly the case with fire safety.

Everyone can contribute towards fire safety by:

- Keeping flammable materials away from heat sources including keeping waste away from coolers and other electrical equipment.
- Maintaining good housekeeping standards.
- Never obstruct fire exits or escape routes.
- Never block or misuse fire extinguishers.
- Never overload plugs.
- Report any damaged electrical appliances, including plug and/or cable, to your manager.

## Evacuation

As part of the health and safety pack, each festival develops a specific evacuation procedure. This information should be given to you during your induction/briefing.

The specifics will vary slightly depending on the venue, but in general:

- On hearing the alarm, **leave the venue using the nearest exit**, without stopping to collect personal belongings.
- **Make your way to the assembly point** for roll call.

You mustn't leave until the role call/check-in is completed. We don't want the local fire and rescue team searching a burning building looking for you, while you're enjoying a beer at the pub next door!

Never re-enter the building unless told to do so by a designated authorised person.

CAMRA volunteers are not expected to tackle a fire unless a fire is blocking your only available exit route.

## Accident Procedures and Hazard Reporting

Unfortunately, things do sometimes go wrong, from cutting fingers on broken glass to tripping over the pallet someone "just left there for a second, honest".

Any incidents occurring however minor, should be reported.

Incidents should be reported on site to your nominated first aider and logged using our simple online reporting tool.

This can be accessed via the QR code below or the poster, which should be displayed in the back-of-house areas of your festival.



Additionally, unsafe acts/conditions, as well as other incidents such as aggressive behaviour, can be reported via this tool.

**We're not looking to blame anyone;** we just want to understand better what happens at our festivals.

For example, if we have 10 reports of finger cuts while removing Lindr machines from their cases.

We can investigate why and make changes to how they are stored/dispatched...

If we don't get 10 reports, we can't fix the problem, and while it's relatively minor, more people end up with cut fingers...

## First Aid

A list of qualified First Aiders should be displayed on site (often the volunteer office or staff room). The details of first aiders and where to go if you require treatment should also be included in your volunteer briefing before your shift.

If you are a trained First aider and would be willing to help if called on in the event of an accident, please provide a copy of your qualification, which will be placed on file.

Any supplies taken from a First Aid box should be noted so boxes can be replenished.

## Electrical Safety

All equipment supplied from the CAMRA warehouse in Luton is subject to regular testing and inspection (PAT). Any branch-owned equipment should also be regularly tested.

A visual inspection of all equipment should be performed before use. If any equipment is faulty or obviously damaged, do not use it and bring this to the attention of the festival organiser/safety officer immediately who should ensure the equipment is taken out of service and cannot be accidentally used.

CAMRA volunteers must not attempt any electrical repair unless properly trained and authorised to do so. Tampering with electrical equipment can lead to serious consequences.

## Hazardous Substances

As a general rule, the use of hazardous substances at our events is restricted to domestic cleaning products and chemicals for cleaning cellar equipment.



You mustn't use any substance unless:

1. You know exactly what it is!
2. You have been provided with suitable training in its use and, where appropriate.
3. You have been provided with the necessary personal protective equipment.

In all cases, a COSHH data sheet should be available at the point of use for each substance. This data sheet will identify the substance, its use, hazards, PPE requirements, disposal and First Aid instructions. Ask your manager or safety coordinator if you are unsure.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

During set up and take down a range of personal protective equipment maybe required, in most cases this will include:

- Safety footwear (e.g. with steel toe caps or steel toe covers) must be worn when moving or lifting casks.
- Gloves when manual handling.
- High visibility clothing (vests etc.) should be worn when directed to do so mainly around moving vehicles
- Goggles and gloves when using line cleaner and sterilise.

It is important that all volunteers wear or use PPE when undertaking activities where it is deemed necessary to do so.

Anyone found not to be adhering to this requirement will be asked to comply. Further breaches may involve either disciplinary action being taken, or in extreme cases, the volunteer being removed from site.



## Moving and Handling

During the set-up (and take-down) periods of a festival, there is a whole lot of manual handling. From loading in coolers, boxes of cooling saddles, taps and other cellar equipment to our wonderful beers and ciders.

Wherever possible, we have ensured that manual handling activities are reduced to a minimum by employing manual handling aids such as sack barrows, trolleys, cask lifters, etc.

You should be briefed at induction on the equipment provided and how to use it safely. If you have any doubts or concerns, speak with your festival organiser or safety officer in the first instance.

Damaged or faulty manual handling aids or damaged wheels on fridges or coolers should be reported to your organiser or safety officer.

**Please inform your organiser, health and safety coordinator or manager if you have existing medical conditions or if there may be roles you might not feel comfortable undertaking.**

## Working at height

We are working at height anytime our feet are off the floor, no matter the height involved (not just over 2 meters as some people believe).

Work at height at our festivals is mainly limited to cellaring casks during setup or dipping casks during the festival. Occasionally, hanging banners or signage. Any work at height should only be undertaken by those trained to do so, using approved equipment, whether a step ladder or a hop-up type step.

The equipment should be fit for purpose and used properly.

A visual inspection should be completed before taking/using any steps.

If you have any doubts at all about your ability to use a stepladder or a hop-up, do not use it.

Tell your festival organiser or safety officer of your concerns.



# Part Two – Working on Bars

## Slips and trips

We've already covered housing keep in the first part of this guide. Head back to have another look if you need to.

It is necessary that 'sensible' footwear be always worn by volunteers working behind bars.

For the avoidance of doubt, we consider footwear with an open toe, high heels, or that does not in any way enclose the entire foot to be unsuitable. Volunteers who present themselves wearing such footwear may be denied permission to work.

## Broken glass

Broken glasses (and bottles) are commonplace at CAMRA festivals.

Don't pick up broken glass with your hands!

A dustpan and brush should be available. Check with your bar manager regarding the disposal of broken glass, which shouldn't go into a regular bin!



## Basic Food Hygiene and Bar Work

Beer and cider are considered food substances under the Food Safety Act 1990.

Therefore, all bar staff should follow the following guidelines:

- Avoid touching your hair and face as far as possible while working.
- Wash your hands every time you enter the serving area.
- Always wash your hands after handling dirty glasses or rubbish.
- Cover all cuts and sores with a blue plaster.
- Do not work if you have experienced any food poisoning symptoms (sickness or diarrhoea) in the previous 48 hours.

## General advice

- Always remember to hold the customer's glass by the lower third, and do not touch it to the tap.
- Do not hold the glass at the top, and under no circumstances should you insert your fingers into the glass itself.
- Never drink from a customer's glass.

If anybody complains about the quality or taste of their beer, contact the bar manager immediately.

## Allergens and intolerance's

Beers, ciders, and other drinks available at CAMRA festivals may contain allergens or ingredients to which customers may be intolerant.

If you receive a question from a customer regarding allergens and you are unsure, you must check with the bar manager for the correct answer.

Some people can develop a **severe reaction** to allergens, which **can be life-threatening**.

Each festival will vary in its allergen procedures, and it is essential that you, as a volunteer, are aware of the procedures. There are a number of common ways that beer festivals make allergen information available, these include:

- Beer matrices – essentially a list of all beers with details of the allergens (either displayed or held behind the bar for reference).
- Information displayed on cask end cards.
- Information displayed on hand pumps.



## Alcohol

Most of us like a drink. I mean, why volunteer at a beer festival if you're not a beer or cider fan?

However, when serving alcohol, it is important to understand that alcohol is a depressant drug that can change the way people behave and when consumed in excess can have serious effects on health and well-being.

The sale and supply of alcohol is a highly regulated area, with both legal and social implications. Committing licensing offences can lead to personal fines and a criminal record.

To ensure we all stay compliant, it is important to understand:

- How alcohol can affect users
- The amount of alcohol that is in a drink.
- The importance of not serving alcohol to under-18s.
- The signs of potential intoxication.

## How alcohol affects users

In the early stages of intoxication, people may become more relaxed and talkative this is what gives the illusion that alcohol is a stimulant.

Several factors can affect the effects of alcohol:

- A smaller person has less blood than a larger person; therefore, the same number of drinks will produce a higher concentration of alcohol in a smaller person
- Simply, the more alcohol consumed, the greater the effect.
- The presence of food in the stomach slows the rate at which alcohol enters the bloodstream.
- The amount of alcohol in a drink
- Those serving drinks must understand the amounts of alcohol in a drink.

**Alcohol by volume** or ABV, which is shown as a percentage and represents how much of a drink is pure alcohol. E.g. a beer with an ABV of 5% means that 5% of that drink is pure alcohol.

ABV is easy to compare when drink servings are the same size, e.g., a pint vs. a pint.

## No and Low Alcohol

In recent years we have seen a massive increase in "No and Lo" alcohol alternatives.

A customer who asks for an "alcohol free" product mustn't be sold a "low alcohol" product.



**Units** are a helpful way to compare the amount of alcohol in different sized drinks even if the ABV is the same.

**One unit = 10ml of pure alcohol.**

If you're unsure check with your bar manager.

Product	ABV range (example)	Units
Beers and ciders (pint)	3–5%	1.7–2.8
Beers and ciders (can 330ml)	3–5%	0.99–1.65
Spirits (whisky, Vodka, rum, gin) (25ml)	35–40%	0.35–1.0
Wine (125ml)	8–16%	0.6–1.5

## Under 18's

Some festivals do not allow under 18s entry, while others do (when accompanied by an adult). It is illegal to sell alcohol to a person under 18 or to someone else on behalf of a person under 18.

All venues are required to have a "challenge system" in place. Where any person who appears to be under a set age (usually 21 or 25) is challenged to produce identification to prove they are over 18.

CAMRA festivals operate a Challenge 25 age verification policy.

Signage should be in place to indicate this at the entrance and at each bar. In general, acceptable forms of ID are:

- Passport
- Driving license
- PASS proof of age card
- Military ID.

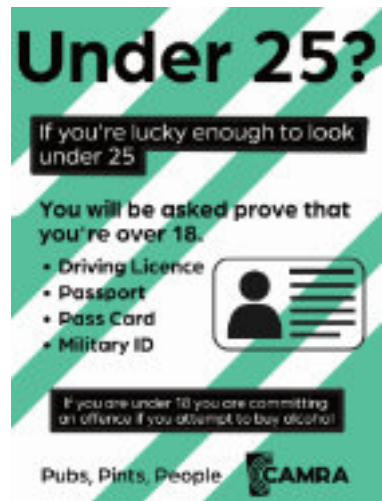
All must be original copies, not photocopies or digital copies.

Some festivals will challenge attendees, and admission will be issued with an age verification wristband. This shows that the person has been challenged and has provided acceptable ID. Your beer festival organiser or bar manager will advise if this is in place.

Even where a challenge/verification system is in place it remains the servers (again, that's you!) responsibility to ensure under 18s are not served alcohol.

Either serving an under 18 directly or to someone else on their behalf can lead to:

- £90 personal fine
- Criminal record



Simply, if you're not sure, make the challenge – if ID can't be produced no sale.

## Serving "Drunks"

It's illegal to serve someone who is already intoxicated or "drunk". Unfortunately, there is no legal definition of drunk, although these are potential signs of drunkenness:

- Swaying
- Staggering
- Slurred speak
- Inability to pay (can't get a card or cash ready, etc.)

These examples are just potential signs of drunkenness, but could also be due to illness or disability.

If you are unsure, ask your bar manager.

Either serving someone who is deemed to be drunk or someone on their behalf can lead to:

- £90 personal fine
- Criminal record

If you're not sure if someone is drunk, talk to your organiser or bar manager.

## Refusals log

Some festivals may require that any refusals of sale be recorded. Your festival organiser or bar manager will let you know if this is needed and, if so, how to proceed.

## Weights and measures

### Beers and ciders

Unless prepackaged (bottles/cans) beers and ciders must be served in **1/3 or 1/2-pint** measures or **multiples** thereof.

CAMRA festivals should utilise lined glasses, this means that liquids should be poured to the appropriate line.



### Spirits

Most spirits must be served in either **25ml or 35ml measures** or multiples thereof. These must be served:

- using a jigger to measure the serving
- A mounted optic

### Wines

Other than pre-packed single-serve bottles, wines are available in 125ml and 250ml measures. All measures dispensed using the relevant jigger.

## Alcohol and Drugs Rules for volunteers

Festival volunteers must not consume excessive amounts of alcohol or take any "recreational" drugs whilst working at the festival, nor should they be under the influence as a result of consumption before starting at the event.

CAMRA reserves the right to take disciplinary action in relation to drugs or alcohol concerns affecting work. However, this will only be used as a last resort.

## Violence, Aggression

We believe that the risk of violence and aggression to volunteers is low, as there is usually access control to the venue and security staff or stewards are generally on hand.

If you feel threatened at any time, please seek assistance. For volunteers who take money, there are specific controls concerning cash handling, and you will be briefed accordingly.

## Harassment

Although incidents of racism or sexism are very rare at beer festivals, CAMRA wish it to be known that it would not tolerate racist, sexist or any other discriminatory behaviour, comment or actions by anyone connected with the festival.

It is also important that you, as a volunteer, understand that you do not have to tolerate any discriminatory treatment, whether in the form of actions or remarks, directed at you by customers or colleagues. You should tell your manager immediately about any incident that occurs who will act upon that complaint.

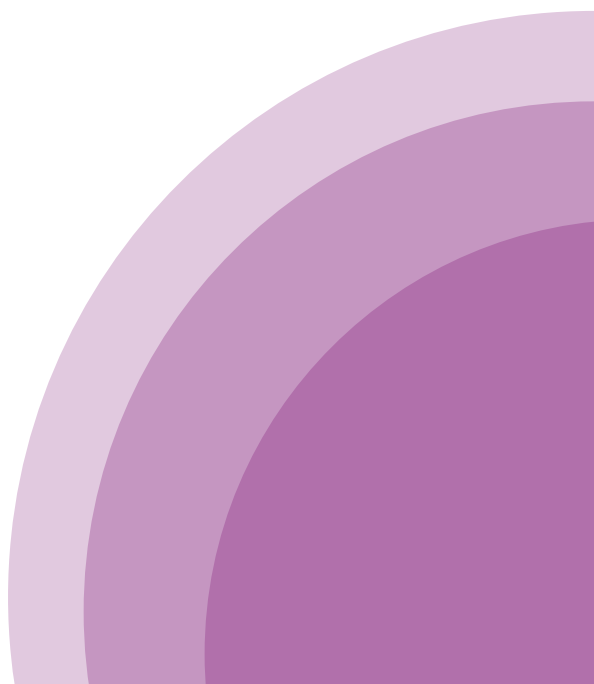
CAMRA requires festival organisers to ensure that volunteers conduct themselves in keeping with CAMRA's policy on equality of treatment. A volunteer who is found to have acted in contravention of that policy should be removed from working at the festival.

## Disciplinary Procedures

We must ask all festival volunteers to follow basic safety instructions, and those who refuse will be dealt with appropriately. Where a volunteer persistently offends, they will be asked to leave the festival site by the event organisers.

Examples may include:

- Not wearing or using safety equipment or clothing
- Deliberate interference with signage or property provided in the interests of health & safety
- Misuse of safety equipment, including PPE, alarms, etc
- Breaches of licensing regulations





**Campaign for Real Ale**

**9 Finway, Dallow Road, Luton, LU1 1TR**