

FACT SHEET – ALCOHOL & SOCIAL MEDIA

Or how to navigate the tricky subject of alcohol and Rovers social media messages.



INTRODUCTION

Scouts is not an alcohol free organisation, however, at times, consumption of alcohol has the potential to send the wrong message about what Rovers stands for, or what its members are into. Alcohol is legally able to be consumed by Rovers and Leaders in Scouting. However, it's not appropriate to consume it on some activities. We already have policies stating when and where. You can find these on National and State Rover pages.

This guide aims to give some advice and ideas on how to manage your social media message when it relates to alcohol consumption.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Depending on the event it may be considered a normal part of life by wider society. Issues arise when the consumption of alcohol appears to be the main reason for an event, or that the aim of the event is to get completely intoxicated.

This creates problems with Duty of Care, safety issues, and negative publicity for both Scouting and Rovers.

Photos and comments on social media can quickly end up more widely circulated than you expect. Where context is lost, this could send a message that Rovers are heavily into a drinking culture or risky behaviour. Rovers is so much more than this, so it's worth working to avoid reinforcing and perpetuating stereotypes about young adults in Scouting.

AVOIDING THE ISSUE

- Avoid labeling photo albums with "Rover", "Scouts", or anything to do with the Movement if there are pictures of drinking / activities which are not a positive source of media for scouts (eg. you can label an album "Mudbash" if you went to it with all the racing and activities. People always like to see those photos).

- When captioning pictures use the same approach to labelling (eg. buying alcohol before a moot and posting that picture)
- Generally avoid any pictures on scout websites with alcohol visible.
- 'Fun' pictures should be in private albums away from the public. Just think, would you want your parents, or local Venturer parents, to see these pictures?
- SETTING UP: If you can hide visible alcohol as you take pictures, hide it.
- If you can replace visible alcohol with something non-alcoholic as you take pictures, do it.
- TECHNOLOGY: Photo editing software is your friend when removing alcohol in images. Remember; put the focus on the people, not the grog.
- WHAT'S THE FOCUS? Critically ask yourself what image the pictures portray, or could be interpreted to portray. What would Venturer parents think?
- If you're not sure, don't upload them! Read the policies. Ask someone outside your Crew for a second opinion (your Rover Commissioner would be ideal!).

Social media is great, but can, sometimes accidentally, send the wrong message. Try not to get too hung up on photo censorship. Use a bit of critical thinking on how others could interpret what you post or share. Consider the risk that it may get shared more widely than you expected.

For more information on this topic check out www.rovers.com.au/resources or contact your Branch Rover Council, or Region/Branch Rover Commissioner.

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WHAT'S THE FOCUS? [L] Bush Dance 2014, obviously there is beer on the table. Focus is on participants, who look happy and fresh. [R] BRC AGM wine glass in incidental and not an obvious part of the picture. Neither image is negative or incriminating.



TECHNOLOGY: Harbour Cruise, note photo-shopping out of glasses, use technology to avoid the potential issue! As with above, participants look fresh and happy.



SETTING UP: If alcohol in the picture is going to be very obvious, ask your participants to hide it.



CHOOSE YOUR SITE: If it's really obvious, don't post it to a Scouting site and/or tag with Scout related # or comments. What you put on your personal pages is your business if you don't obviously link it to Scouting.