

Party Planner Tool

Problem Free Party Guide

The Five Most Common Reasons Parties End in Problems

1. **The party happens spontaneously without any planning.** Sounds pretty cool, doesn't it? A couple friends show up with a case or a few bottles, someone sends a tweet or a group text, and the next thing you know, a party is roaring at your place. But this kind of event tends to lead to problems because you end up with no control. When nothing is planned, anything can happen. And it often does, leaving you to deal with the consequences.
2. **The doors are open for anyone.** Large, blow-out parties or events where anyone and everyone is welcome sound epic, but they're actually magnets for problems unless they are very well managed. Contrary to popular belief, open-door parties won't attract that amazing person you've been hoping to meet. Instead, they tend to draw people looking for free or illegal booze or an easy way to steal stuff, and people who don't care what happens to you, your stuff, or your future. It's fine to plan a big party with a lot of people—just make sure they're people you know.
3. **The event revolves around alcohol and nothing else.** If drinking and getting drunk is the only point to the party, then be prepared to deal with a lot of very drunk people who are loud, disrespect your property, and act in ways that bring the police. A group of intoxicated people is not as much fun as it sounds. It usually ends with someone passing out or starting a fight, or people getting on each other without even realizing what they're doing (not the greatest sex to have). A group of people who come together only to black out? Huge risk for all kinds of problems for you, them, and everyone else. And being blacked out doesn't fly as an excuse in court.
4. **Alcohol is out in the open for everyone to take as much as they want.** When you're hosting a party, supplying the alcohol may seem like the right thing to do. But if you supply the keg, garbage-can punch, or cases and bottles for everyone at the party to drink, you'll also be legally responsible for procuring alcohol for any person under 21 (against the law in all 50 states), serving alcohol to people who are already intoxicated (against the law in many states), and if someone gets drunk and becomes rowdy, noisy, or obnoxious, being the resident of a disorderly house (subject to a legal citation and possibly a violation of lease that can result in eviction). It's illegal to sell alcohol without a license, so that's not the answer either.
5. **Nobody's willing to step in when things go too far.** Every party or event needs at least one person who stays sober and alert who has the authority to quiet people down, stop people from engaging in harmful behavior, cut off people from alcohol when they are intoxicated, stop highly intoxicated people from entering, and deal with the police or other authorities if they arrive. Not having someone in this role tells everyone at the party that anything goes.

The Five Things Everyone Should Do to Avoid Party Problems

1. **Make a plan, follow the plan, and let others know the plan.** Making a plan is the most important step, and it doesn't have to take long or happen far in advance. Creating a plan enables you to think through important things, starting with what you and your friends want to get out of the event and how you're going to get there. You'll need to make a few decisions (e.g., how many people you want at the party, what you want to do together, what you want to avoid, what would make the event a success in your mind). Once you've created the plan, it's important to stick to it. Be sure to let everyone know what type of event it will be so they know what to expect. And tell your neighbors, your landlord, the university (when appropriate), and the event facility manager about your plan. They may also be able to help you create the plan.
2. **Monitor the alcohol: bartend or make it BYOB.** There's a reason why bars have bartenders and not open spigots or bottles, and it's not just so they can make money. Having someone behind the bar, whether it's a third-party vendor/bartender or a member of your group who is at least 21, helps you control the amount of booze people drink and sets the tone for the role of alcohol in the party. More importantly, it keeps the very small percentage of students who don't know their limits from getting wasted on your alcohol. An alternative, especially for informal parties, is to have people bring—and drink—their own alcohol.
3. **Make the party about more than getting drunk.** There's got to be something more than just getting high or drunk at your party or event. That's fun for about an hour, then it becomes a huge mess. What else do you want to do together? Get to know new people? Have good conversations? Tell each other stories? Dance? Play a game or other activity? Watch a band, film, performance, or sporting event together? There are endless possibilities; you just need a little planning and some creativity. By switching the focus to something other than getting drunk, you enable people (who are of legal age) to use alcohol to enhance the event and get what they really want out of it. There are lots of ways to relax, let loose, and forget about the statistics exam for a few hours. By the way, making the party about something other than getting drunk is easier when you provide alternative beverages and some food. You'll want to add these to your plan.
4. **Have one or two sober party/event monitors, and empower them to take care of problems.** You may not need a stereotypical bouncer, but you can probably see why most clubs have them. Some people don't know what is appropriate in social situations, they don't know their limits, and they won't respect you, your guests, or your property. You need one or more group members who will step in to stop a disaster from happening, ask someone to leave, intervene in a tense situation, or deal calmly with the police or other authorities if they show up. The party/event monitors need to be empowered to keep the peace and to prevent things from going haywire.
5. **Be proactive with the police and other authorities.** Despite your best efforts, unwanted problems can pop up at events and parties where alcohol is present. The best approach is to be proactive with the police (e.g., talk with campus and community police officers about safe party strategies, call the police when unwanted guests arrive or get too rowdy, work with the police to resolve issues peacefully). Assuming the police are out to bust college students and ruin every college party is silly; they'd far rather be doing something other than showing up at your event. Get to know the police officers in your area, and if they show up uninvited, work with them. Being defensive or obstinate gives them more cause to investigate or cite you. They are most likely responding to a complaint from a neighbor or a venue manager, and need to be reassured that you have matters under control.

Lessons You've Learned Hosting Events

Below write some of the lessons you've learned about avoiding party problems. Your lessons may be related to things like how you invite people to events, how you manage the event, and the party activities you have found the most successful.

