

# PARTY PLANNING

# TOP 10

Planning safe parties on college campuses can be a daunting task, even if “fun” is the goal. As you may have noticed in the Risk Management Foundation Policy on Alcohol and Drugs, it is best, and easiest, for chapters to hold their events at third-party venues. These venues have built-in preventative and security measures that chapters would otherwise create for an event at their chapter house. Though you may find it is more work to throw a party on chapter property, it is not impossible.

To create a safer environment for you and your guests, use the following list of top 10 helpful hints to plan a party at your chapter house. This list is in line with all Sigma Chi Fraternity and RMF policies. Be aware that accidents and incidents may still happen, but employing the following measures may help prevent them. However, remember that policies on your campus may override the possibility of having events at your house. Sigma Chi chapters must adhere to all local rules and regulations in addition to Fraternity and RMF policies. The Sigma Chi Fraternity believes in educating its members about responsible alcohol consumption and holding its members accountable for their actions. As a Sigma Chi, you have voluntarily accepted the responsibility of following the ideals and values the Fraternity stands for. Hold yourself, your brothers and others accountable.

# 1.

**Printing out your school directory does not constitute a guest list.**

Complete an event-planning checklist and guest list. Check with your university for their event-planning requirements. Complete this well before the party and, if applicable, supply a copy to university officials. It is important that these are completed and used in order to structure the event and deter any unwanted guests.

# 2.

**Tidy this up!**

Inspect the house for any potential hazards. Begin by restricting access to certain parts of the house to create a designated party area. This will assist you in controlling and maintaining the event. Be aware of any areas that may become dangerous, such as a stairway, boiler and mechanical room, and the kitchen. Keep brooms and other cleaning supplies on hand in case cleanup is needed immediately. (Refer to the chapter house safety issue of RISKWATCH for assistance with this step.)

# 3.

**It's not just about STOP, DROP and ROLL anymore.**

Check to see that smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are functioning properly. To prevent a house fire, remove all candles and incense and designate an outside smoking area. (Refer to the fire prevention issue of RISKWATCH for additional information.)

# 4.

**A yellow rope around your chapter's property does not constitute a controlled environment.**

Ensure there is only one entrance to the event. This will guarantee that all guests are properly checked for identification and accounted for upon entry. This, however, does not mean that there are not alternative exits in case of an emergency. It is the responsibility of the party monitors to make sure all emergency exits are clearly marked, accessible and supervised.

# 5.

**Sober party monitors are just that: SOBER.**

Check that party monitors, bouncers and ID checkers know their duties. These volunteers must remain sober throughout the entire event. They are responsible for the safety of the guests and strictly enforcing the guest list. Make sure there is a method for monitoring alcohol consumed by guests.

# 6.

**Designated drivers are for brothers who want to avoid being thrown in jail, out of school or out of life itself.**

It is vitally important that an appropriate system be in place to ensure brothers and guests get home safely. Design a designated driver program where brothers volunteer to remain sober and escort or drive guests home. Also, the phone numbers to local cab companies or university transportation should be posted and easily accessible. Develop a program that best suits the needs of your chapter. (Contact the RMF if you need help developing a designated driver program.)

# 7.

**Have a crisis management plan and know it!**

Local emergency numbers, university contact information, chapter advisor and house corporation president information should be posted and easily accessible. Additionally, the chapter should have a crisis management plan in place, with a designated chapter spokesperson in case of an emergency. (Refer to our crisis management issue of RISKWATCH for ideas and guidelines.)

# 8.

**It's about being a good host.**

Provide a variety of soft drinks and other non-alcoholic beverages to guests. These are good alternatives for those guests under 21 years old or who do not wish to consume alcohol. Offer an assortment of snacks in addition to the usual salty chip variety. Provide a separate area for alcoholic beverages to monitor their consumption. Do not permit drinking games.

# 9.

**Posting signs that say "Must be 21 and over to drink" don't cut it.**

An appropriate and effective means of identifying guests over 21 should be in place. Wristbands, hand stamps, or other easily identifiable symbols have proven to be effective. This makes it easier for party monitors and security guards to ensure that only guests of legal drinking age are consuming alcohol. Also, never use chapter funds to pay for alcohol. Parties should be BYOB.

# 10.

**Don't be a meathead.**

Ensure all unwanted behavior/guests are controlled or removed. If a confrontation or altercation occurs, attempt to diffuse the situation, but do not be wary of contacting university officials or local law enforcement. Hire a security service to assist in “bouncer” duties and party admission. Providing a safe and secure environment for all guests is necessary.

# 11.

**BONUS: Know the rules.**

It's important that you understand the alcohol and drug policies set forth by the RMF, the Sigma Chi Fraternity and your university. Review these policies as you plan your party. If you have questions, ask! Be aware that if your university's rules and policies are stricter, those are the rules that apply.