

## Women's Safety in Licensed Venues

### Why this matters

Everyone has the right to feel safe when they go out. Sadly, some people — especially women — experience unwanted attention, harassment, or unsafe situations in and around licensed venues. This doesn't just happen in nightclubs or big city areas. It can happen in **any** licensed venue.

Creating a safe environment is a **team effort**, and every staff member plays a part — not just managers or security.

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### What kinds of behaviour are we talking about?

Staff should be aware of behaviours that can make others feel uncomfortable, unsafe or threatened, including:

- Unwanted sexual comments, touching, or attention
- Someone being followed, pressured, or not left alone
- A person trying to isolate someone who seems intoxicated or vulnerable
- Disrespectful or degrading language or gestures
- Harassment or discrimination towards same-sex couples
- Bullying, intimidation, or aggressive behaviour with a sexual or gender-based focus

These behaviours can happen **between patrons** or sometimes be directed towards **staff**.

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### Your role as a staff member

Even if you are new to the industry, you are still part of creating a safe and respectful venue.

You can help by:

- **Paying attention** to what's happening around you
- Trusting your instincts if something doesn't look right
- Letting a supervisor, manager or security know early
- Checking in with someone who looks uncomfortable or distressed

You are not expected to put yourself in danger — your job is to **notice, report and support**.

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### Supporting someone who may be in distress

If you notice someone who looks upset, unsafe or overwhelmed:

- Approach calmly and respectfully

- Ask simple, private questions like:  
“Are you okay?” or “Would you like some help?”
- Offer to move them to a safer or quieter area
- Involve a supervisor, manager or security staff as soon as possible
- Take the situation seriously, even if you are unsure what happened

A kind, calm response can make a huge difference to someone who feels unsafe.

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### **Preventing problems before they escalate**

Venues aim to create a culture where harassment and abuse are **not tolerated**. As a staff member, you support this by:

- Treating all patrons with respect
- Not ignoring inappropriate jokes, comments or behaviour
- Acting early rather than waiting for a situation to get worse
- Working as a team — communicating concerns to other staff

Early action can stop a small issue from turning into a serious incident.

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### **Why people don't always report incidents**

Some patrons may not speak up because they:

- Feel embarrassed or worried they won't be believed
- Don't want to cause trouble
- Are unsure who to talk to
- Have been drinking and doubt themselves

This is why staff awareness is so important. You may be the one who notices and offers help first.

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### **De-escalation and empathy**

Situations involving harassment or distress can be emotional. Staff should:

- Stay calm and speak in a steady, respectful tone
- Avoid blaming language
- Focus on safety, not judgement
- Get help from a supervisor or security when needed

Showing empathy—listening and taking concerns seriously—helps people feel supported and safer.

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### **The big picture**

Hospitality venues should be places where everyone can relax and enjoy themselves. By being alert, respectful and proactive, staff help create a culture where:

- Harassment and discrimination are not accepted
- Patrons feel supported if something goes wrong
- Safety is everyone's responsibility

Even small actions from staff can help prevent harm and make venues safer for everyone.