

# Six FAQs for FIPG, Inc.

- 1) Why can't a Greek letter organization have a fundraising event at or in "conjunction" with a bar? They are raising money for a worthy cause.

**Response:** One of the changes made to the FIPG policy in July of this year addressed with specificity the issue of fundraisers at taverns, bars or "Clubs" at which alcohol accounts for 50% or more of the income of the establishment. In Section 6, the policy reads, *"This includes any event held in, at or on the property of a tavern as defined above for purposes of fundraising"*.

The reasons for this policy include but are not limited to:

- By associating an event with a tavern, a chapter links the national organization with the activity. If someone is injured during the event—a fight, a slip and fall situation, drinking and driving after consuming alcohol in the bar—the tavern may be covered under a Dram Shop law which restricts the amount of damages that a plaintiff may collect from the tavern. There is no such restriction for a women's or men's national organization.
- Many chapters require members to attend fundraising events. By requiring them to be on site, they also expose members to the risks that are involved with numbers of people consuming alcohol. Again, a case will then come back to the national organization.
- There are no rules regarding who may be on site, i.e., these are not "Closed" events. Therefore, there are no safeguards in place to assist in protecting members.
- Finally, aren't you (our undergraduates) weary of being called the campus drunks? By holding events in, at or in conjunction with bars, we reinforce a stereotype that we can't do anything with alcohol. There are better ways and better places to raise funds.

- 2) Why can't we give our "littles" alcohol at, for example, the big sister or big brother revealing night?

**Response:** The three most dangerous nights for women or men joining Greek letter organizations are bid night, "Bigs" night and initiation. Of the three, bid night and "Bigs" night have generated a number of deaths during the past ten years. The FIPG policy was specifically rewritten in Sections 9. and 10. to address the concerns. Providing alcohol to people under the legal drinking age and in the context of celebration has led to tragedy. As well, if hazing is involved, the "Littles" are often told that they must consume a certain amount of alcohol within a given amount of time, which has led to deaths.

- 3) A men's fraternity on my campus wants to host a recruitment event at a local Hooters restaurant. When I challenged them on that, they responded that they selected Hooters "Because of the great food". Does the FIPG policy address this concern?

Yes, in two places. Under Section 8., the FIPG policy specifically prohibits any recruitment or rush activity at or in conjunction with a tavern or alcohol distributor as defined. If the undergraduates claim that Hooters is not a tavern as described in the policy, demand that they produce documentation to prove their contention.

Under the "Sexual Abuse and Harassment" section, one may also make an argument that holding an event at Hooters is a violation of that aspect of policy. Clearly, the men are not going to Hooters for the food. If the food was the primary reason, why couldn't the men simply do a large takeaway order, bring the food back to the chapter house or another facility and focus upon recruitment?

- 4) My campus is in a rural area. Many students describe themselves as hunters, particularly for deer. Some of the students want to keep their hunting rifles in their chapter houses. I note that the FIPG policy specifically prohibits firearms in the confines or premises of the chapter house.

Response: The FIPG policy does address firearms under the "Fire, Health and Safety" category, Section 4. The reasons for that policy include the fact that it is virtually impossible to control all of the members all of the time; that alcohol and firearms are a lethal combination; and that no procedure for safety is foolproof because fools are very ingenious. There have been several well-publicized incidents involving fraternity members and firearms during the past year and many others that have been communicated in anecdotal form by staff members and volunteers. Bottom line: There are too many things that can go tragically wrong to justify allowing firearms in chapter houses or on the property.

It is important to note that many campus departments of public safety now refuse to warehouse weapons for students because of liability concerns. If a chapter has a number of members who want to keep their weapons in the area, encourage them to rent a storage area off campus.

- 5) What is the recommended limit for alcohol brought to a BYOB event for personal consumption?

Response: One six-pack of twelve (12) ounce beers or one four-pack of wine coolers. These types and amounts of alcohol reflect the standard packaging of beer and wine. That was one reason for the reference to a six-pack or a four-pack. Another is that it is difficult to become intoxicated on six twelve-ounce beers unless one "Shoots" the beers in rapid succession.

It should be noted that the Board of Directors of FIPG is always open to recommendations from students or Greek professionals or others involved in the community regarding the type, kind or amount of alcohol allowed at BYOB events. If you have a recommendation, by all means submit that to Wynn Smiley, FIPG President, in care of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity ([wsmiley@ato.org](mailto:wsmiley@ato.org)).

- 6) I noticed several changes to the language regarding the use of alcohol at events for pledged members or new members. What are "Family" events?

The "Family" concept is relatively new to our organizations within the context of "Families" actually becoming sub-groups or entities within a chapter. We've noticed a disturbing trend of "Families"—that is, members linked to each other via Big/Little relationships extending to "grandmothers", "grandfathers" and so forth—developing "rituals" or other initiation activities. Those activities almost always include alcohol and hazing. And, because "family" events often involve only a handful of members, the new member educator or chapter president may not be aware of what is occurring in these activities.