

Bar

The Responsible Service Standard

Five steps for serving alcohol with care, from the first glass of water to the car home. Said quietly and at the guest's side, a refusal is heard as care.

Who	When	You need
Bartenders and bar waiters, with the duty manager	Every guest drinking alcohol, from first order to leaving	Water at the station, the food menu, a taxi number, the incident log

Measured by Water offered with the first drink · Every refusal made in private · Every incident logged before shift end

1 Offer water

Put a glass of still water beside the first alcoholic drink without being asked, and keep it filled all evening. Water slows a guest down without anyone mentioning how much they have had.

"Some water alongside, Mr Fitzgerald. I'll keep it topped up."

Common mistake Bringing water only once a guest seems drunk. By then it reads as a judgement, and they refuse it.

2 Count quietly

Follow the drinks per guest on the tab and watch for the signs: louder voice, spilled glasses, ordering before the last drink is finished. Tell your colleague on the floor in a word.

"Seat three, fourth double in an hour. Food and water next, check with me before another."

Common mistake Each person counting only their own drinks. The guest had two from the bar and three from the floor.

3 Slow the pace

Before any refusal, offer food from the bar menu, a longer drink with less alcohol, or an alcohol-free drink you would order yourself. Slow the pace of the drinks, never the warmth of the service.

"The kitchen is open until midnight, Mr Silva. The club sandwich goes very well with that."

Common mistake Serving the next round slowly and hoping the guest notices. They do, and order two at once.

4 Refuse in private

When the next drink is one too many, tell the duty manager, then tell the guest alone, at their side, in a low voice. Never across the bar, and never in front of their friends.

"I'd like to stop the alcohol here tonight, Mr Brennan. Let me bring you a coffee or something soft."

Common mistake Saying it across the counter. The guest now has to defend themselves in front of strangers, and will.

5 See them home

Offer a taxi, the hotel car or an escort to the room, and make sure the guest leaves with someone. Log it before the end of the shift: time, guest, what was said and what was done.

"23:40, room 512: stopped after five drinks. Calm. Security walked him to the lift. Night manager told."

Common mistake Leaving it out of the log because it ended well. Tomorrow the next shift serves the same guest the same way.

Signs, Moves and Words

Six situations every bar sees each month, and the move that keeps the guest safe and their dignity intact.

What you see	What you do	What you say
Ordering before the glass is empty	Bring water and the food menu	"Something to eat with this one?"
Louder voice, repeating stories	Slow the pace, offer a longer drink	"May I suggest something longer this time?"
Spills a drink, misses the stool	Stop alcohol, tell the duty manager	"Let me get you a coffee and a comfy seat."
Friends buying rounds for one guest	Speak quietly to the host of the group	"Shall we slow the next round for your friend?"
Guest about to drive	Offer a taxi or the hotel car	"Let us drive you. Your car is safe here tonight."
Guest will not accept the no	Duty manager joins, away from others	"Let's talk over here, just the two of us."

How to use this with your team

Brief one row per shift this week, then role-play the refusal in pairs before Friday. The duty manager reads the incident log every morning and raises any entry at the next briefing.

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