


Date: November 18, 2022

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Wally Hebeish, Chief of Police 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Responsible Beverage Service Education and Disposable Drink Safety Kits**

On August 23, 2022, the City Council directed the City Manager to work with the Police Department to provide a report on education efforts for local alcohol-licensed establishments regarding responsible beverage service and the feasibility of purchasing disposable test kits that detect illegal substances in beverages. The City of Long Beach has 1,099 alcohol-licensed establishments (748 on-sale, 309 off-sale and 42 non-retail type). Since 2018, the city has seen a 14 percent increase in licenses.

Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) Training and Education

In partnership with the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), the Police Department (PD) regularly conducts educational training sessions for the owners and employees of bars, nightclubs, and restaurants in Long Beach. The focus of the training includes information about alcohol related crimes, overserving, and liability issues. Additionally, PD encourages the communication between licensed establishment employees, ABC and the PD through a variety of educational inspections, meetings and enforcement operations. ABC's educational campaign to promote responsible service of alcoholic beverages includes programs like mandatory Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) Training.

Assembly Bill 1221 (2017) The Responsible Beverage Service Training Program Act was created with the intention of reducing alcohol related harm to local communities. RBS training teaches licensees, managers, and servers how to serve alcoholic beverages responsibly for on-premises consumption and how to reduce alcohol related incidents and crimes. Licensees, managers and servers must be certified by an accredited RBS training provider and pass an ABC exam within 60 days of employment. The RBS training is currently available in several different languages.

Disposable Test Kits that Test for Illegal Substances in Drinks

PD staff explored the feasibility of purchasing disposable test kits that detect illegal substances in drinks, specifically alcoholic beverages. ABC as well as several outside law enforcement agencies who were contacted do not currently have a program for distribution of disposable test kits that test for illegal substances in drinks. However, the City of West Hollywood (West Hollywood) has adopted a program of distributing disposable test kits that test for illegal substances in drinks. West Hollywood does not have a tracking mechanism in place; therefore, the effectiveness of the program is unclear.

RESPONSIBLE BEVERAGE SERVICE EDUCATION AND RECOMMEND THE PURCHASE
OF DISPOSABLE DRINK SAFETY KITS

November 18, 2022

Page 2

The test kit brand used is “Test My Drink.” West Hollywood leaders, City Council members and volunteers distribute test kits by handing them out to patrons, residents and ABC establishments in the city’s entertainment districts. Test My Drink is a product used to test alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages for “Date Rape” drugs, such as Rohypnol (Roofie) and Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB). Two of the most well-known date rape drugs. These drugs can be odorless, colorless and tasteless, and are known to leave the body within a short period of time making it hard for investigators and medical personnel to detect.

The West Hollywood City Council approved one-time funding from the General Fund to purchase the drink spiking test strips. Approximately \$15,000 was allocated, with funding to purchase 2,500 test kits (10 tests per kit) as well as collateral/educational materials. West Hollywood plans to have several test kit distribution events. West Hollywood Councilmembers, appointed officials, and staff participated in the first distribution event on August 22, 2022, which focused on bars and restaurants in West Hollywood’s “Rainbow District.” Additional distribution events will take place throughout the coming months. Local law enforcement has not been involved in the program at this time.

City sponsored distribution events staffed by City employees and volunteers seems to be the most effective way to provide test kits to patrons, residents, and ABC establishments in the Long Beach entertainment districts. PD will work with the Health Department and other City departments to explore an appropriate model for Long Beach.

If you have any questions, please contact me or my Chief of Staff, Commander Michael Solomita, at extension 87301.

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