Premises, Promises

Spring semester is a great time to be a college student. Graduation is approaching for many, and for the rest of us, vacations and summer beckon. Spring events and theme parties are part of the excitement.

With the party season approaching, it’s a good time to review some basic elements of “premises liability” and risk. Think about these as you plan your next event:

1. **Your guests’ expectations matter.** Invited guests assume you have promised a good time as well as a safe time. Moreover, the law may treat persons as “invited,” even if that’s just implied from poor event management. Think about hazards that may not be obvious to your guests. Fix any hazards you can fix and warn of any others.

2. **“Reasonableness” is key.** If you have read the **GRB** before, or attended one of our presentations, you know that we consider “reasonableness” to be the most important word in risk. What does reasonableness require? It requires that you consider the expectations of others – judges, juries, parents, etc. What would they think you should have done?

3. **It’s not just what you know, it’s also what you should have known.** In many cases, if you should have known about a hazard, the law may presume that you did know. Do you have sober members watching the party to find out what you “should” know about?

4. **Know your rules.** Both your campus and the national office have rules that apply to your parties. Following those is a necessary step to good event management.

Have fun, while you protect your premises, your organization, and your guests.

Potential Risks on Your Premises

- Slippery Floors?
- Broken Handrails?
- Hazards from other guests?
- Underage Drinking OR Crimes?
- Inadequate Security?
- Uneven Ground