

Explaining Licenses & Permits for Formals

Although we deal with a fun, glamorous and exciting industry, behind the scenes is a very dark and serious "engine-room" where issues are being dealt with that you may never see. You should know about them, if for no reason other than being comfortable that qualified minds are working on keeping you safe.

Venues may advertise that they're ready and willing to host your formal, but are they legally allowed to do that? In most cases, they don't even know the answer to that question themselves. If they don't even know, how are you going to know?

So the question arises "What happens if the venue doesn't have the right licenses or permits? Does the place explode?" Well - No, probably not however, if anything goes wrong and there's an incident of any kind. Perhaps someone gets hurt or there's a reason for the Police, Fire Brigade or Ambulance to attend, even for a false alarm, there's likely to be a legal problem. Culpability and liability will have to land on someone, and you don't want that to be you. Insurers run for cover when procedures aren't perfect so "no permit, no coverage".

At best, the event could be shut down. At worst, it may end up in court. There are no winners in either case. So how do you protect yourself? The very best way to start will be making sure that the venue has all of the necessary licenses and permits in place, then seeing that right through to all the workers and suppliers, then checking procedures are documented and finally covering the whole package with a variety of different insurance policies. This is the less glamorous side of formals, however, it's no less important.

Venue Licenses:

In NSW (at this time) many commonly licensed venues offering themselves as available to host high school formals fall under one of the following types...

- Hotels (Hotelier's License)
- Nightclubs (On-Premises License Public Entertainment Venue)

Under these Licenses, before a school formal can be booked, they have to apply for, and be granted, a special permit known as a "Minor's Functions Authorisation". Put quite simply, if they don't have one, they can't host your formal, and if they do have one, they can't sell any alcohol to anyone at that formal (regardless of age, even parents or teachers).

Most remaining common license types are...

- On-Premises License (Restaurant) (Vessels) (Governors) (Caterers)
- Registered Club License

Under these types of licenses, special permits aren't required but strict controls are highly applied by government.

The permits and controls are only the first step. Once the venue has that part sorted out, every person working at the formal, even volunteers, has to have a special Police clearance called the "Working with Children Check".

Every electrical appliance that's plugged into power at the venue on the night has to be checked and tagged according to health & safety standards by a licensed electrical testing contractor and every set of goods and services supplied to the event has to have "Risk Assessments" carried out and be certified with a "Safety Compliance" or "Hazard Identification" sheet.

Finally, there has to be insurances for Public Liability and a range of other things before the event is properly covered.

Compliance is a huge task, but at Prom Night Events, we have it all covered for you. We stay on top of legislative changes.

Just remember that there's only one opportunity to get this right. That's why our motto is *"School Formal? Problem Solved!"*. Prom Night Events has maintained a 100% success record since 1990.

Disclaimer: Prom Night Events is not giving legal advice. We're merely reporting what we understand of legislative restrictions as we understand them to apply to our industry at the time of creation of this fact sheet. We advise all readers to independently check the validity of these issues with the relevant government authorities directly.

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