

Ed board: No booze while tailgating

2011 policy requires schools to apply for exemptions every year

Mary Stone/Lewiston Tribune

The president of the Idaho State Board of Education said state rules forbid alcohol consumption while tailgating on campus grounds, including at the University of Idaho.

Emma Atchley of Ashton in eastern Idaho, who was elected board president last week, said a policy revised in 2011 requires schools to request permission for exceptions to the alcohol rule on a year-to-year basis. UI, where alcohol and tailgating have mixed on campus for two decades, has made no such request, Atchley said.

"They can tailgate all they want. They just can't have alcohol according to the current board policy," she said. "And this is the practice at our other institutions. They ban alcohol at their tailgates."

Boise State University fans can tailgate with alcohol on city of Boise property at a park near Albertsons Stadium, Associate Vice President for Communications and Marketing Greg Hahn said.

Tailgating is also popular in private parking lots off campus, Hahn said.

But those who tailgate on campus are directed to a set of rules on the university website that discourages public alcohol consumption.

"There's no designated places on campus for tailgating where alcohol is explicitly allowed," Hahn said.

Atchley said UI representatives can present a request to the board when it meets in August to allow alcohol consumption during Vandal football tailgating.

"That is what we are expecting our institutions to do," she said.

The state board approved some alcohol-permit requests from Idaho's three universities last week but rejected others, denying permission for UI's "Fan Zone" and BSU's "Huddle." The board allowed a trial run last year for those two football game-day features, but some members expressed concern about keeping tighter control over alcohol consumption during campus events.

State board policy stipulates that events approved for alcohol permits should include a written invitation for attendees, and the board clarified that a football game ticket does not count as a written invitation. Alcohol was available to ticket holders 21 and older in the Fan Zone and Huddle last season.

UI's practice of allowing alcohol during tailgating in the parking lots west of the Kibbie Dome came under scrutiny after the issue of alcohol consumption during campus events was reviewed by the board.

State board spokesman Blake Youde said UI's policy of designating the parking lots as private property on game days so the activities there are not sponsored by the school likely does not exempt the school from the no-alcohol rule.

"That method, while maybe it was approved in the 1990s, two decades ago, is not a method by which the board operates now in approving sale or consumption of alcohol for these type of events," he said.

UI spokeswoman Jodi Walker said Wednesday the university's legal counsel is reviewing the practice, which she further clarified.

"What me mean by privatization is probably better described as we close the lot to the general public," Walker said. "To use the lot, you have to buy a special game-day parking ticket. It's private in the sense that it's not open to the general public."

The university is reviewing what has been done in the past, Walker said, and is "working with the (state) board to ensure we are in compliance."

Whether the university approaches the board in August to request permission to allow alcohol during on-campus tailgating depends on the result of conversations with the board, Walker said.

"Those discussions are ongoing," she said. "We are working with the state board to ensure that everything is in line."

Stone may be contacted at mstone@lmtribune.com or at (208) 848-2244. Follow her on Twitter @MarysSchoolNews.