

## Bouncer

I am bouncer at Awful Arthur's. I'm originally from Alexandria, Virginia. My mother was an accountant and my father was an engineer in the army.

I have worked at Awful's for about two years now. Some of my worst days are game days. I have to deal with a lot of drunks and it can get out of control. One time, we had a kid stumble over the stairs and pretty much bust his head open and get a concussion. We had to try and carry him out and make sure he was OK until the cops and ambulance came. Game days are good when they end and I get paid for all the hard work. The less drunks there are the easier my job is.

Before this job, I had never worked in a restaurant before. Restaurants obviously have a different environment than your normal desk job.

I had worked in security and bouncing in the D.C. Area. It is very different when compared to a small college town. Here in Blacksburg, there is a friendlier atmosphere. Attitude towards the customers is a lot different than when you're working up in D.C. In D.C. you had to maintain a high level of professionalism. If someone did not like the way we ran things they could decide to leave or be made to leave. In Blacksburg, we are more customer based and try to take a more personal approach to make sure everything is OK. In some situations, it's nicer to be able to just toss someone out but it is more rewarding if you can work something out with someone. Of course, you don't always have the time to fix everyone's problems.

This job allows for a relatively high level of freedom. Aside from being on the premise and following the dress code, wearing the work shit, there aren't lot of restrictions. Well, actually they just created the policy that we are not allowed to be on our phones texting. Apparently, it became a problem with the waitresses.

There isn't really room for advancement in my particular situation, a small level operation in a small college town. In bigger more metropolitan market, the chances of moving up in security are much higher.

The hours for this job are unique and if you consider yourself an insomniac and can't really sleep much at night or tend to sleep later than everyone else, it could be an ideal job for you. Also if you don't want to go out a lot on the weekend and blow money away it's a nice way to save it since you'd be working rather than spending.

For me this job is just a stepping stone until I get a more serious job, ideally one in engineering. I would possibly consider staying in this field if I was in a bigger area, like D.C. and I worked for an independent security company instead.

My work days do not vary much but there are slight changes depending on if we have a function or we're just coming to work for a band, normally we have a band on Fridays and Saturdays and Thursdays we have a karaoke. If we're setting up for a band, I come in and help set up the signs around the place about the drinks, where you're allowed to have drinks and when you're allowed to start smoking and all that. After set up, I start going around and checking ID's because we turn from a regular restaurant to a bar at ten o'clock or 9:30. A second or third bouncer is usually there by that time, if I'm the first one. They help you with checking ID's. After that you start setting up downstairs. If you're charging entrance fees, someone would be working at the door, checking ID's, trying to spot fake and trying to make sure people aren't coming into the restaurant with stuff they shouldn't be coming in with. Besides that, I could be working behind the bar, pretty much helping the bartender with stuff, if they need more drinks from the cooler, if they need kegs changed, if they need mixers. I could be walking around and making sure people are ok and that no one is getting out of control and no one is getting in fights, stuff like that, spotting anything that is shady or not beneficial for the business. You're doing this until the band ends, usually around 1 o'clock or 1:30. Around that time, I start pretty letting everyone know that it's last call and letting them know that they need to leave soon. There is a lot of

things that go on, I have to make sure that no one is still drinking beyond 2 because the bar will lose its license if people are drinking after 2 o'clock so you got to stop them a little bit before that. Also I have to make sure no one walks outside the bar with alcohol, an awful lot of people try to do that for some reason. Once everyone is out, I start clearing the drinks and everything. I do some light cleaning as far as tables go and behind the bar just to organize it. After that I take some trash from behind the bar out and I'm done for the night.

On Mondays we have TechLive, the radio station that talks about the games. It requires a little bit different set up in terms of furniture, tables and stuff like that, so I do stuff like that also. Besides that the beginning and ending routine is the same. Of course you are not charging but you're still making sure people are of age. Sometimes we'll have special events, the band will have a list of people who are OK, who are underage but can come in, depends on the agreement of the band with the bar on that night. Normally that means that they pay extra because that would require extra monitoring on our end because we are a strictly 21 and over bar on normal weekends. Besides that its almost all the same as far as closing goes.

As far as management, most of the bouncers and security just deal with the bar manager. They don't really have to deal with the other aspects of management. It's kind of nice to only have to answer to one boss compared to other places where you normally have to answer to, restaurants especially, to a couple of bosses. It makes things a little difficult when one person is telling you something and another is telling you something else. So when you're dealing with one boss, in my case the bar manager, it's easier to have your issues resolved because you're only dealing with one person. If you got an issue, he'll lets you know what to do about it and vice versa.

Personally, I haven't had a problem a with management. It's really an easy job especially if you're an easy going person like myself. It's not hard to maintain a good relationship with management and they don't really give you a reason to have issues with them. The conflicts happen when other managers tries to tell us something goes against what the bar manager wants. It can make it difficult to

maintain the lines of authority.

Sometimes when you have to deal with really difficult customers who are being rude and the manager would just like to be decent with them, sometimes you get really frustrated with it. But depending who the closing manager is a lot of them tend to say “No, if you're being difficult with my employees, they really don't have to take this and you're more than welcome to leave.” But sometimes yeah I'll think, “I have other education, why am I still doing this?” One time this guy was intoxicated and he decided he was going to swing at me, he didn't end up hitting me but still I'm thinking in my head, “Why am I still doing this? I don't need to sit around here dodging drunks trying to fight them.”

Hopefully five years I won't be working in this job, that would be pretty sad. I have an engineering degree so hopefully I can find work in an engineering firm somewhere. As far as 10 years, I'd like to be doing management in an engineering firm still somewhat though dealing with a lot of people, that'd be nice.

As far as jobs go for a college job or right after college, bouncing is really not a bad job, you get to meet a lot of people and deal with a lot of people. Also there is a lot of opportunities through meeting customers around town based on wherever you're working at. You make some good connections working in a such a social environment and it's really a nice job to have when you're in college I believe, but I wouldn't really recommend it as far as a career, I think that someone could always do something better.