# **How to Tap a Keg**

What You Need:  
• The keg of beer  
• A tap

• A tall can or a bucket and trash bag  
• Ice

**Step 1: Ice Your Brew**

One of the most common causes of excessive foam is warm beer. You'll want to start the beer chilling at least two hours ahead of time, and ideally four to five hours. A typical keg bucket is only about half as tall as a standard keg. So in order to ensure that the entire surface area of the keg is cooled (not just the bottom half) place a plastic garbage bag in the bucket, and then put down a thin layer of ice before dropping in the keg itself. Continue to pack ice inside the garbage bag until you cover the top of the keg. Check periodically and add ice as needed.

****Tip:**** **Cool down the tap too**. Letting cold beer hit a warm tube can cause foam. So leave the tap on ice with the keg an hour or so before you decide to tap.

**Step 2: Tap That Sucker**

Seat the party pump on top of the keg, making sure not to push down on the spring-loaded ball valve. Lock the pump onto the keg by rotating it clockwise, then engage the tap by pulling the handle out then pushing it down. If you see bubbles or foam forming around the tap, something's not seated correctly, so disengage the pump, take it off, and try again.

**Step 3: Master Your Pour**

No matter how carefully you've followed these steps, **the first glass of beer out of a keg will always be foamy**. Pour foam into a spare glass until beer starts flowing. Foam begets foam, so you'll waste more than you'll drink if you try to pour beer into a foamy glass. Also, **you don't have to pump before the first pour**, since the keg is already under a great deal of pressure.

Since there's no rule of thumb for the proper number of pumps per pint, it's easiest to do this with a friend rather than alone. One person should hold the glass at a 45-degree angle and point the spigot toward the side of the glass. While the pint is filling up, gradually turn the glass vertical to avoid spilling. The other person should give the keg a few pumps anytime the glass starts to get too foamy. **Just don't overdo it, too many pumps will—you guessed it—create foam as well.**

**Step 4: Teach your guests how to use the keg**

Operating a keg can seem confusing for guests who've never tapped one before. Teaching your guests how to tap a keg will also help reduce the amount of beer that is wasted.

The most common cause of foamy beer is not knowing **when** to pump the keg. Remind them that, **if the beer is only coming out as a trickle, they may need to give it 5 to 6 good pumps.** However, if only foam is coming out, they’ve pumped too much.

****Tip:****Another option is to have a designated keg tapper to ensure guests are able to get refills without any issues.