

What Civic Groups Can Do

The role of civic groups in reducing youth access to alcohol

Civic groups, such as Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, and VFWs, can play an important and visible role in reducing underage drinking, not only within their own institutions but also in the wider community.

For example, civic organizations can adopt policies to prevent underage drinking at organization-sponsored events and they can initiate and participate in community-wide efforts to prevent underage alcohol use. Historically, most civic groups address underage alcohol problems by promoting educational and/or treatment strategies. For example, such groups often conduct workshops in which community members discuss alcohol, learn tips for approaching students who may have a problem with alcohol, and explore ways of being a good role model.

While these efforts are good tools for educating parents and other community members, they should be supplemented with strategies that will effectively reduce youth access to alcohol and change other factors in the community that contribute to underage drinking (i.e., lack of positive social opportunities, etc.). Civic groups, because of their broad membership and visibility in a community, could potentially make a significant impact in underage drinking by promoting and/or supporting access-reducing initiatives.

Strategies for reducing youth access to alcohol

Adopt policies and practices to prevent underage alcohol use at civic club functions, fundraisers, and events. Many civic groups serve alcohol at their restaurant, bar, or meeting place. If they allow youth on the premises, they should adopt internal policies and practices to ensure that youth are unable to obtain alcohol. A comprehensive policy should mandate that:

- Alcohol is served only in a designated location, which is inaccessible to young people.
- The alcohol supply is carefully monitored by an adult.
- Servers/sellers attend training sessions to learn laws and legal consequences for providing alcohol to underage youth and learn skills for recognizing and refusing sales to underage youth.

Implement community service activities in collaboration with civic organizations.

Community service is common among many civic organizations. Group members could organize their volunteer network to participate in teenage drinking prevention projects such as monitoring off-sale alcohol establishments to ensure that youth are not obtaining alcohol in parking lots, or forming a speakers' bureau to educate community members on compliance checks and other access-related solutions to teenage drinking.

Work with alcohol merchants in the community to prevent alcohol sales to youth.

Membership in civic organizations often includes a wide range of business leaders in the community and may include owners and managers of alcohol establishments. Through their own membership, civic groups can influence the business practices of alcohol establishments and can reach out to others in the community. For example, a civic organization could sponsor a responsible beverage service training program for merchants and/or could provide them with

signs and posters that alert customers of establishments' procedures for checking age identification and penalties for providing alcohol to minors (see [responsible beverage service training and checking age identification policies](#)).

Participate in the planning of community festivals and other events. Underage youth commonly obtain alcohol at community festivals, carnivals and other events. Because members of civic organizations are often involved in planning these activities, they have an opportunity to ensure that proper practices and policies are adopted at the event to prevent youth access to alcohol. These policies can include:

- Establish non-drinking areas for families and youth.
- Establish drinking areas where underage youth are not allowed. Prohibit people from leaving these areas with alcoholic beverages.
- Require server training for alcohol servers/sellers and event coordinators.
- Prevent patrons from leaving the event with alcohol.
- Ban alcohol consumption in parking lots and monitor them for underage drinking.
- Hire adequate security to monitor alcohol consumption

For additional examples of policies see [alcohol restrictions at community events](#).

Donate money and/or sponsor fundraisers for prevention organizations. Many civic groups adopt an issue or cause that they support through volunteer and funding assistance. Projects that can reduce youth access to alcohol such as compliance checks can require resources for police time, communication, and other purposes. Donations from civic groups can help fund these and other access-reducing initiatives.

Encourage compliance checks. Compliance checks are an effective method for identifying alcohol merchants that illegally sell alcohol to youth. In many communities, police are mandated to conduct compliance checks, but in others, there is no organization that is responsible for conducting them. In these communities, civic organizations could play a leadership role in initiating and conducting the checks to identify non-compliant merchants and ultimately to reduce youth access to alcohol (see [compliance checks](#)).

Educate city council members on policy-level solutions to keep alcohol away from teens. Local municipalities can enact many policies to prevent youth access to alcohol and underage drinking. City councils and county boards are more likely to consider and pursue local legislation when they believe there is widespread support for it. Civic group members can meet one-on-one with council members to educate them about policy options, invite them to a community forum, or attend/testify at city council meetings.

Recruit community support for the passage of local ordinances to reduce youth access to alcohol through public speaking and media advocacy activities. Civic organizations such as Rotary Clubs and VFWs often have newsletters and other means of communicating with their membership and the community. Through these media, they can raise awareness about access-related issues and can gain support for initiatives to reduce teen drinking.

What Colleges Can Do

Youth access to alcohol on college campuses

Underage drinking on college campuses continues to be a significant problem nationwide.¹ Underage alcohol use is associated with numerous problems including unintentional injuries, assault, risky sexual behavior and rape.^{2,3,4} In addition to the problems that befall students who use alcohol, students who are nonusers are also negatively affected by the misconduct of their peers. Problems can range from sleep and study interruption to physical or sexual assault.⁵ Reducing access to alcohol on campus and in the surrounding community may be the most effective approach to reducing these problems.

The role of colleges in reducing youth access to alcohol

Colleges, as institutions, have legal and assumed duties to ensure that students' conduct does not create a foreseeable risk to other students. An institution's negligence in upholding these duties can result in liability.⁶ Because underage drinking is against the law and is associated with increased injuries and other problems, such behavior creates a potential liability for colleges. For this reason, it is especially important for colleges to implement strategies aimed at reducing underage access to alcohol.

Recommended strategies to reduce youth access to alcohol

Promote policies and practices that aim to reduce the flow of alcohol at private parties.

Policies/practices to consider include: 1) banning beer kegs (kegs tend to encourage larger amounts of alcohol consumption in shorter periods of time), 2) banning home delivery of alcohol on/near campus (see [home delivery restrictions](#)), 3) prohibiting self-service of alcohol, and 4) serving non-alcohol drinks and food.⁷

Encourage police to conduct compliance checks. Routine checks by police of local liquor stores and bars may encourage establishments to comply with age-of-sale laws and responsible serving practices.⁷ (See [compliance checks](#)).

Encourage police to question underage students who are caught drinking about where they got their alcohol. Although underage youth may be reluctant to divulge the identity of their alcohol supplier, police can provide incentives for disclosure, such as reduced penalties for the underage offender. Police should then be encouraged to charge the supplier.

Work with the city council to implement and/or improve laws that affect youth access to alcohol. College officials and community members can work with city council members to pass/strengthen/enforce laws that: 1) limit the hours and days that alcohol is sold, and 2) limit the number of liquor licenses around campus.⁷

Encourage local merchants to implement responsible serving practices. College officials and community members can encourage local alcohol merchants to: 1) check the age identification of all persons who appear to be under the age of 30 (see [checking age identification](#)), 2) train employees on responsible serving practices such as how to check IDs, identify and confiscate false IDs, and cut-off service to underage and intoxicated patrons (see [responsible beverage service training](#)), 3) eliminate pitchers, "happy hours" and other reduced-

price alcohol promotions that encourage excessive drinking, 4) promote alcohol-free drinks and food, and 5) eliminate “last-call” announcements.⁷

Ban alcohol sponsorship at college events. Sponsorship of an event means that corporations give financial support to an event in return for product promotions and brand advertisements at that event. Bans on alcohol sponsorship at college events prohibit alcohol-related promotions at college events, which are traditionally attended by a large percentage of underage youth, and at other events where alcohol sponsorship sends an inappropriate message to the college community. Although bans on alcohol sponsorship do not directly reduce underage access to alcohol, such bans may bring attention to the problem of underage drinking and reduce the cultural acceptance of providing alcohol to underage youth (see alcohol sponsorship restrictions).

Establish alcohol-free dorms. Colleges can establish alcohol-free or substance-free housing in which students agree not to use alcohol or other drugs. Such living arrangements may reduce youth access to alcohol by creating an environment in which alcohol possession and consumption is prohibited.^{7,8}

Create alcohol-free campuses. To reduce underage access to alcohol, colleges may prohibit the consumption or sale of alcohol on campus. Colleges without a ban on alcohol can place restrictions on alcohol use at college events, require that all servers and sellers at events and alcohol establishments be trained in responsible beverage service, and implement routine compliance checks of licensed establishments.^{7,9}

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What Faith Organizations Can Do

The role of faith organizations in reducing youth access to alcohol

In 2001, 43% of Americans worshipped regularly and 70% held memberships in churches or synagogues.¹ According to Svendsen and Griffin, “Faith institutions have the collective potential to touch a broader range of the community than any other sector” because they touch people of all ages, economic statuses, and ethnicities.”²

The involvement of faith organizations in the prevention of underage alcohol use is important because of their presence in individuals’ lives, their credibility in the community, and their ability to mobilize large and diverse groups of people.

Typically, faith organizations have focused their efforts on identifying and responding to members of the congregation who experience alcohol-related problems such as alcohol dependency or dealing with an alcoholic parent or spouse. Interventions generally include pastoral counseling and/or referral to support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, and Al-A-teen. While it is important to *respond* to alcohol-related problems among members of the congregation, it is also necessary to take steps to *prevent* them from occurring in the first place.

To prevent underage alcohol use, faith organizations can be a strong link between prevention organizations, youth, parents and the community by offering education, developing internal policies to prevent teens from accessing alcohol at church events and participating in efforts to keep alcohol away from youth. Although there are a range of activities that faith organizations can do to prevent and respond to alcohol problems, the following discussion focuses primarily on strategies for reducing youth access to alcohol.

Strategies to reduce youth access to alcohol

Establish a policy on alcohol use at congregational events. Faith organizations should create policies on alcohol use at their events such as receptions, picnics, and other activities. If the policies permit alcohol use, they should include provisions to prevent teenagers from obtaining the alcohol, such as:

- Allow alcohol to be served only in a designated location that is inaccessible to young people.
- Ensure that the alcohol supply is carefully monitored by an adult.
- Required servers/sellers who dispense alcohol to be trained to check the age identification of people and recognize intoxicated individuals.

Parties, workcamps, and overnight lock-ins should also have strict policies that prohibit youth from: (1) bringing alcohol to the event, (2) consuming alcohol at the event, (3) attending the event if they have consumed alcohol prior to the event, or (3) re-entering the event.

Educate parents on their role in preventing youth access to alcohol. Through various formats (newsletters, parent groups, bulletins, etc.), congregations can provide parents with tips and advice on creating family practices and policies to reduce youth access to alcohol. For example, congregations can inform people about the legal consequences of providing alcohol to

people under 21 who are not their own children. They can also provide tips for hosting alcohol-free parties for teens, supervising teenage gatherings, and monitoring the family's alcohol supply.

Initiate and participate in community-wide efforts to reduce youth access to alcohol. In addition to internal steps that faith organizations can take to reduce youth access to alcohol and prevent teen drinking, they can extend alcohol prevention efforts beyond their walls by initiating or participating in community-wide prevention efforts to reduce youth access to alcohol. For example, faith organizations can:

- Educate community members about the importance of preventing underage access to alcohol.
- Conduct compliance checks with local police to identify alcohol merchants who illegally sell alcohol to underage individuals.
- Meet with alcohol merchants to discuss concerns related to youth access to alcohol.
- Mobilize their congregation to support alcohol prevention ordinances and attend and/or testify at city council or county board meetings.
- Network with other faith organizations to learn about and participate in their alcohol prevention activities.

Resources

Building a team ministry: A congregational approach to substance abuse.

Contact: Roger Svensen
Minnesota Prevention Resource Center
2829 Verndale Avenue
Anoka, MN 55303
1-800-247-1303

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What Hotels and Motels Can Do

Underage access to alcohol at hotels and motels

Youth may be able to access alcohol at unsupervised parties held at hotels and motels where adults over the age of 21 or underage youth have rented a room. In addition, youth may obtain alcohol at events, such as wedding receptions, held at hotels. Whether the supply of alcohol to underage persons is either indirectly related to the hotel (e.g., an adult rents a room where underage drinking occurs) or directly related (e.g., employees hired by the hotel for a wedding reception sell alcohol to an underage person), the hotel is playing a part in allowing youth access to alcohol.

Laws related to underage consumption at hotels

States and communities can consider passing laws that would hold hotel owners responsible for underage drinking that occurs on hotel property. Hotel owners may be less likely to allow underage drinking on their property if they believe they will be held financially or legally responsible for such parties.

Strategies to reduce youth access to alcohol at hotels

Restrict the number of persons who can occupy a room at one time. Limiting the number of persons who can occupy a hotel room (e.g., no more than four people at a time) may aid hotel managers in controlling parties or gatherings involving underage drinkers.

Prohibit parties on hotel property that create a noise disturbance. Such policies can aid hotel managers in controlling underage drinking, which is often accompanied by loud noise and disruptive behavior. These policies have the additional advantage of preventing the disturbance of other hotel guests.

Regularly monitor hotel parking lots and other unsupervised areas. Monitoring hotel parking lots, pools, and other unsupervised areas may prevent gatherings where underage drinking is likely to occur.

Post signs at the registration desk and in each room informing adult renters of their legal liability of providing alcohol to youth. Hotel owners may also want to require adult renters to sign a statement upon registration indicating that the renter understands and agrees to abide by the law. (Note: Refer to your state's laws on liability for providing alcohol to underage youth).

Restrict room rental to persons 18 years of age or older. Check the age identification of all persons appearing under 25. Hotel owners may reduce underage drinking on their property, and thus reduce their legal liability, by implementing policies that restrict persons under the age of 18 from renting rooms. However, under some state laws, hotel/motel owners may be prohibited from placing such age restrictions on renters of hotel rooms.

Allow only trained servers to serve alcohol at hotel events. Hotel owners should require all alcohol servers and sellers hired for wedding receptions or other events that are held at the hotel to be trained in responsible beverage service. In addition, all alcohol servers and sellers employed in a hotel's restaurant or bar should be required to have server training (see responsible beverage service training).

Require event planners to hire extra security for events in which alcohol will be served. All alcohol at hotel events should be monitored by a hotel employee or security guard to make sure that youth do not have access to the alcohol (e.g., ensuring that youth cannot serve themselves beer from kegs that are unsupervised).

Hire extra security during sporting events. Hotels should hire extra security when there is an event in town that draws a large percentage of underage youth, such as high school sports tournaments, college games, or other sporting events.

What Parents Can Do

The role of parents in reducing youth access to alcohol

Parents play a central and important role in influencing their children's alcohol use. They control the availability of alcohol in the household, serve as role models of alcohol use, influence family norms on alcohol use, and set alcohol-related expectations for their children. Nevertheless, the efforts of even the most conscientious parents can be challenged by teens' easy access to alcohol throughout the community and the reality that parents cannot constantly monitor their children's activities to keep them alcohol-free. While reducing teens' access to alcohol is only one of the *many* steps parents should take to keep their teens alcohol-free, it is an important step and should be included in their overall approach to keep alcohol from their children.

Laws related to parental behavior and underage alcohol consumption

Where, when and if parents may give alcohol to their children varies by state. In some states, parents may supervise their children's alcohol use in restaurants whereas other states restrict parent-supervised alcohol use to the home or prohibit it altogether.

Social host liability laws allow people to be held liable for providing alcohol to underage youth who are not their own children. Although state laws vary, social host liability provides the legal right to sue adults who provide alcohol to another teen or knowingly allow underage alcohol use in their home. These adults may be sued for large sums of money to cover damages and injuries that result from that teen's intoxication (see [social host liability](#)).

Strategies to reduce youth access to alcohol

Monitor the alcohol supply in the home. The primary source of alcohol for young teens who are just beginning to drink alcohol is their own home or a friend's home.^{1,2} Therefore, parents can reduce youth access to alcohol by keeping alcohol out of the home or making it inaccessible to their children. If parents choose to keep alcohol in the home, storing alcohol in a locked cabinet or closet can help prevent teens from accessing it. Parents who do not want to lock their cabinets should regularly check their alcohol supply.

Talk with other parents. Parents can talk with parents of their teenager's friends about whether underage alcohol use is prohibited at home. Parents can also ask other parents if their alcohol supply is inaccessible to youth and if unsupervised parties or gatherings in their homes are prohibited.

Never purchase or provide alcohol to your teen's underage friends or other youth.

Although some states' laws permit parents to provide alcohol to their own children, nearly every state prohibits adults from providing alcohol to other youth. Nevertheless, many parents illegally provide alcohol to their teen's friends at parties, family celebrations, etc. Regardless of their own beliefs about the acceptability of underage alcohol use, this behavior is likely illegal and could result in criminal prosecution and civil lawsuits.

Although giving alcohol to one's own child is legal in most states, it may send them the message that drinking is okay and it may increase that child's risk of problems related to alcohol use.

One study found that teens whose parents or friend's parents provided alcohol for parties were more likely to: drink, drink heavily, get in traffic crashes, be involved in violence and participate in thefts.³

Begin or join community efforts to reduce youth access to alcohol. Parents are often the most visible and effective leaders in protecting the health and safety of children. Parents can contact their local public health agency or school to learn about and become involved in efforts to prevent teenage drinking. In addition, they can:

- Meet with city council members to pass local ordinances to reduce youth access to alcohol.
- Meet with owners and managers of alcohol establishments to encourage them to adopt practices that will help them reduce sales to youth.
- Encourage police to do compliance checks.
- Encourage faith organizations, schools, etc. to develop policies to reduce underage access to alcohol on their property and at their events.

Resources

A guide for keeping youth drug-free. (1996). DHHS Publication No. 407-844. Provides information, suggestions, and exercises to assist parents, grandparents, elders, mentors and other caregivers in preventing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among teens.

Contact: National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
1-800-729-6686
<http://www.health.org/>

Minnesota Prevention Resource Center. Provides a variety of educational resources for parents of all ages.

Contact: Minnesota Prevention Resource Center
2829 Verndale Avenue
Anoka, MN 55303
1-800-247-1303
<http://www.emprc.org/>

Let's Talk Parents Guide. A 32-page guide that helps parents/guardians address substance abuse with children of different ages.

Contact: American Council for Drug Education
164 W. 74th Street,
New York, NY 10023
<http://www.acde.org/catalog/Cattext.htm>

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What Police Can Do

The role of police enforcement in reducing youth access to alcohol

Enacting and implementing alcohol control policies is an important step in reducing underage access to alcohol. However, such policies cannot be fully effective without enforcement.^{1,2,3} It is imperative that local law enforcement provides effective and consistent enforcement of policies affecting underage access to alcohol. Without such enforcement, communities may begin to view alcohol control policies as meaningless and violations of such policies as acceptable.

The role of police in enforcing laws aimed at reducing youth access to alcohol should not be limited to punishing youth who violate these laws. Instead, law enforcement agencies should: (1) include a variety of prevention-oriented strategies in their efforts to reduce commercial access to alcohol by young people; (2) invest time and effort in identifying and punishing adults over the age of 21 who illegally provide or sell alcohol to underage youth; and (3) take measures to train police officers in more effective strategies of enforcing youth access laws.

Recommended strategies to reduce youth access to alcohol

Ask underage youth who are caught drinking to disclose the source of their alcohol.

Although youth are often reluctant to divulge the identity of their alcohol supplier, police can provide incentives for disclosure, such as reduced penalties for the underage offender. With this information, police can then give a citation to the adult supplier.

Strategies to reduce commercial access:

Conduct a minimum of 2 compliance checks in each licensed alcohol establishment each year. Police need to consistently enforce penalties against alcohol establishments that serve or sell alcohol to underage persons. Such enforcement may be accomplished through strategies such as random compliance checks by local law enforcement. Compliance checks have been shown to substantially reduce sales to minors.^{4,5} (See [compliance checks](#)).

Conduct weekly walk-throughs of licensed establishments. Regular visits to licensed establishments can help establish a police presence and serve as a reminder to merchants that police intend to punish merchants who provide alcohol to underage youth.⁶

Develop a system to monitor alcohol-related problems associated with community events and specific establishments. Such a system may help identify specific problem areas in the community, which may guide future law enforcement efforts and policy development.

Strategies to reduce social access:

Consistently enforce laws against adult providers and social hosts. Penalties against adult providers must be consistently enforced. Social host liability policies can help penalize adult providers and policies such as keg registration can assist law enforcement in identifying adults who provide alcohol to underage persons. (See [social host liability](#) and [keg registration](#)).

Routinely conduct investigative checks of adults who are approached outside alcohol outlets and asked to buy alcohol for youth. Youthful-looking persons can be employed to approach an adult outside stores that sell alcohol and ask the adult to buy alcohol for them.

Adults who do buy alcohol for the underage-appearing person can then be approached by an officer and informed of the penalties for provision of alcohol to minors.

Work with parents, schools, churches, youth and other community members concerned about underage access to alcohol. Such collaborations may help police identify and prevent underage drinking parties before they happen. For example, if a high school teacher hears about plans for an upcoming party at a student's house, he can notify the police who can then visit the home where the party is to take place.

General strategies:

Require each officer to attend an annual training session on the prevention of alcohol-related problems. This training can educate officers about the seriousness of the underage drinking problem and the importance of their role in reducing underage access to alcohol. In addition, such training can be used to educate officers on how a proactive approach to reducing youth access to alcohol can be more cost-effective and efficient than a reactive approach to underage access.

If it is impractical to have every officer trained, at a minimum each local police agency should have at least one designated alcohol control officer who is very knowledgeable about alcohol enforcement and can serve as a resource to all officers in the unit.

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What Schools Can Do

The role of schools in reducing youth access to alcohol

Schools clearly play an important role in preventing underage alcohol use and should be included in all comprehensive, community-based efforts to reduce teen drinking. There is a wide range of activities that schools can undertake to prevent underage drinking, including teaching students alcohol refusal skills and creating and enforcing school policies on alcohol use. Although their role often does not directly focus on reducing underage access to alcohol, schools can and should play a part in reducing access on school property and in the community.

Strategies to reduce youth access to alcohol

Prohibit the possession or consumption of alcohol at all school-related activities. If not already in place, schools should create a policy that prohibits alcohol use at any school-related event—even those not held on school property. For example, alcohol possession or consumption should be prohibited for everyone (including parents and other adults) at all sports events, banquets, fundraisers, and teachers' gatherings. If alcohol is available to adults at these events, students may be able to access it. In addition, teachers, parents, and other adults can be good models by not drinking alcohol at any school-related event.

Adopt practices to prevent students from bringing alcohol to school or school-related events. Some students may attempt to bring alcoholic beverages to school and school events despite strict policies against this behavior. Examples of policies to reduce or eliminate students from attempting to bring alcohol include:

- Allow only mesh or see-through bags. Many schools already require students to carry these types of bags instead of backpacks or purses in order to prevent carrying of weapons.
- Monitor students as they enter the event. Require chaperones to be stationed at the entrances to check suspicious bags and thermoses.
- Monitor parking lots where underage alcohol use often occurs.
- Prohibit students from re-entering an event once they have left.

Educate parents about underage access to alcohol and effective measures to reduce it.

In addition to educating students, schools should provide parents with tips for preventing underage alcohol use. Typically, schools provide parents with information such as "How to talk to your teen about alcohol" and "How to recognize if your teen is using alcohol." While this information is important, schools should also educate parents about community factors that influence their teens' access to alcohol. Schools can also provide parents with tips for preventing access to alcohol in their homes, such as keeping alcohol out of the home, monitoring it, or storing it in locked cabinets.

Initiate or participate in community-based prevention activities to reduce youth access to alcohol. School personnel, including principals, counselors, chemical health coordinators and teachers, are often influential in their community and can be key players in efforts to reduce youth access to alcohol. For example, a school chemical health coordinator can work with other community members to conduct compliance checks to reduce illegal sales of alcohol to youth, or a principal can meet with city council members to encourage the passage of local ordinances to reduce youth access to alcohol.

Resources:

Making the Grade: a guide to school drug prevention program. A comprehensive review of school programs to prevent alcohol, tobacco and drug use.

Contact: Drug Strategies
1150 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20037
202-414-6199
<http://www.drugstrategies.org>

What Worksites Can Do

Youth access to alcohol in the workplace

Alcohol use in the workplace refers to the consumption of alcohol that occurs within two hours before going to work, in the process of conducting work tasks, during lunch breaks or other breaks, at down times, and at work-related meetings or scheduled events. Results of workplace drinking surveys reveal that a significant number of employees: 1) routinely consume alcohol prior to showing up for work, 2) report to work under the influence of alcohol, and 3) drink or become intoxicated on the job.¹

There are special issues surrounding alcohol use in the workplace when employees under the age of 21 are involved. Youth consumption of alcohol in the workplace involves not only a violation of an organization's alcohol policy and an increased risk for poor performance and serious injury, but it is also a violation of state law.

Several problems specifically concerning underage drinking in the workplace include the provision of alcohol to underage employees by co-workers over the age of 21, the availability of alcohol at company social events where underage youth are present, and youth access to alcohol in workplaces that have a license to sell alcoholic beverages.

The role of employers in reducing youth access to alcohol in the workplace

Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe work environment for their employees. If an organization is negligent in providing such an environment, it can be held legally and/or financially liable for harm that befalls its employees. In relation to underage access to alcohol, an organization can be held liable if an underage employee obtains alcohol at work or at a company event and that employee is later injured or causes injury to another person. To reduce such liability, organizations need to implement specific, written policies that address youth access to alcohol in the workplace.

Strategies to reduce youth access to alcohol in the workplace

Provide information to all adult employees about the consequences of providing alcohol to underage persons. Adult employees should be informed of civil liability and criminal penalties, as well as corporate sanctions, resulting from such a violation.

Prevent youth access to alcohol at company events. When alcohol is made available at work social events or work-sponsored events, the employer should take steps to ensure that underage employees do not have access to alcohol. Examples include:

- Monitoring the alcohol supply at all times.
- Requiring all bartenders and serving staff to check the age identification of all persons who appear younger than age 30.
- Requiring all alcohol servers to be trained in responsible beverage service (to help sellers and servers identify and refuse alcohol service to underage persons).
- Limiting service to one drink per employee per visit to the bar.
- Hiring security staff or having a supervisor present at the event to ensure that underage persons do not have access to alcohol.

Prevent youth access to alcohol at licensed establishments. Alcohol policies that address underage access are especially important in businesses that have a license to sell alcohol, such as restaurants, bars or hotels. Examples of policies include:

- Keeping alcoholic beverages under secure lockup or in areas that are inaccessible to underage persons.
- Requiring a supervisor over the age of 21 to be present when an underage worker sells or serves alcohol.
- Informing all underage employees of the laws concerning underage possession and consumption and the penalties for infractions of these laws.
- Informing all employees that it is illegal to sell alcohol to underage persons.

References

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