



Substance Abuse Committee July 2006 Fact Sheet

From Join Together and Policy Impact Communications

Statistics

- More than 1/3 of teen traffic deaths are alcohol-related, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- People who start drinking before age 15, compared to those who wait until 21, are 7X more likely to be in a car accident after drinking and 10x more likely to be in a physical fight after drinking.
- MA DPH reports that teens who start drinking liquor before age 15 are 4x more likely to develop alcoholism and more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as sexual intercourse, binge drinking and violent behavior.
- A federal government study reveals 4 out of 10 students between ages 12-17 who drank alcohol during the past year had a serious problem related to liquor consumption. The report states sexual assault, date rape, car accidents, drowning and suicide is more common among these youth.



Social Host Responsibility

- MA General Law Chapter 138 Section 14 prohibits the selling or furnishing of alcoholic beverages to a person under the age of 21. The statute is broken into 4 elements, but in summary, the only person who can furnish alcohol to a person under age 21 is their parents (guardian) and grandparents on their property. Furnishing does not mean you have to buy the liquor or supply it. In 2000 the Legislature further defined furnishing to mean “to knowingly or intentionally supply, give or provide or allow a person under age 21 to possess alcoholic beverages on premises or property owned or controlled by the person charged” (except for the children of parents and grandparents). This law applies to both adults and minors. Penalties range from probation to not more than 1 year in the house of correction, and/or a fine of not more than \$2,000.00.
- **Liability** – Homeowners can be sued and prosecuted if underage drinking is permitted in their house and a young person dies or is injured from alcohol consumption under the state’s social host law.
- **Drinking is not a “rite of passage” for teenagers.** Don’t try and be a “cool parent” and host a party with alcohol. Talk to your children about your expectations regarding underage drinking. It may just save their life or someone else’s.



Sticker Shock - The goal is to discourage adults and older peers from providing alcohol to minors. Prom season and around the winter holidays are good times for sticker shock.

“Hey You!!! It is illegal to provide alcohol for people under age 21”
--

“Providing alcohol to minors is illegal. Fines are up to \$2,000 and/or one year in jail”
--

- **Thankful Liquor Stores and Police** – In Malden, stores contact the Healthy Malden campaign because they are interested in what the program can do to help them prevent alcohol from getting to kids. The more people that are guarding against this, the easier it is for the store owners to operate. The program is also a boon for police officers.

Police Drinking Cars – Police in West Roxbury and Roslindale have a grant that pays for drinking cars, which are assigned to patrol drinking hot spots, and to respond to those complaining of kids drinking alcohol.



Health Concerns about Energy Drinks – Red Bull, EndoRush and Vitamin Water often contain megadoses of caffeine and other stimulants, vitamin B12, brain-stimulating nootropics, amino acids and more. Experts say it is important for athletes to replace water and electrolytes, but the stimulants in energy drinks – including guarena and bitter orange, a legal substitute for banned ephedra – can cause increased heartbeat and other problems. Also, they help blunt perception of pain. If you don’t feel the fatigue in a hot, humid environment, your body won’t make you slow down to minimize overheating. Exertional heatstroke is a real possibility.