Why Is Underage Drinking a Problem?

- National research shows that 57% of persons under 21 reported drinking at friends’ homes.¹
- Underage drinking is a factor in nearly half of all teen automobile crashes and 50% – 65% of youth suicides.² Alcohol abuse is linked to as many as two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students.³
- Research shows people who begin drinking alcohol as adolescents are more likely to become chemically dependent.
- Underage drinking parties pose a high risk to young people because of the number of drinkers involved and the large quantities of alcohol consumed. These parties often result in alcohol poisoning, traffic crashes, property damage, sexual assault, and other crime and violence.

In 2005, underage drinking cost Minnesota citizens $916 Millions.⁴

Important Telephone Numbers

- Ambulance, Fire, Police Emergency 9-1-1
- Minn. Mothers Against Drunk Driving 800-ITS-MADD
- National Addiction Assistance Helpline 800 559-9503
- Alcoholics Anonymous 800 245-1377
- Al-Anon / Al Teen Resource Services 651-771-2208
- Crisis Connection 612-379-6363
- Bridges to Safety 651-266-9901
- Minn. Domestic Violence Crisis Hotline 866-223-1111
- Nat’l Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-SAFE
- Nar-Anon Families & Friends of Addicts 800 484-7385
- Narcotics Anonymous Helpline 952-989-3939
- National Hopeline Network – Suicide Prevention Hotline 800-SUICIDE
- National Runaway Switchboard 800-RUNAWAY
- National Youth Crisis Hotline 800-448-4663
- Parents Anonymous/Family Helpline 800-843-5437
- Poison Control Center 800-222-1222
- Rape Crisis Hotline 800-656-HOPE
- Rape & Sexual Abuse Center Hotline 612-825-4357
- Sexual Violence Center 612-874-5111
- United Way Community Resource Hotline 2-1-1 or 651-291-0211 or 800-543-7709

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Minnesota MADD  www.maddmn.org
- Hero Campaign  www.herocampaign.org
- Parent Helpline & Support  www.linkup-parents.com
- Parents – The Anti-Drug  www.theantidrug.com
- National Institute on Drug Abuse  www.nida.nih.gov
- Alcoholics Anonymous  www.alcoholics-anonymous.org
- Al-Anon / Al Teen Resource Services  www.Al-Anon-Alateen-msp.org
- Narcotics Anonymous  www.namnnesota.org
- For Teenagers  www.abovetheinfluence.com

Contact the St. Paul Police Department at (651) 291-1111 to report parties or gatherings where minors have access to alcohol. Your call may prevent...

- motor vehicle crashes
- sexual assault
- unintentional injuries
- alcohol poisoning

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies, 2008; National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 2002; and American Medical Association, Office of Alcohol/Drug Abuse, 2001.

² National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse. 2002.


⁴ http://www.udetc.org/UnderageDrinkingCosts.asp
What Is the Social Host Ordinance?
The Social Host Ordinance would hold individuals (social hosts) criminally responsible for hosting or allowing an event or gathering on private or public property where persons under 21 years of age possess or consume alcohol, regardless of who supplied the alcohol.

This ordinance applies to situations in which:
- The social host knows or reasonably should know that alcohol is being possessed or consumed by persons under 21 years of age at their residence or premises.
- The social host fails to prevent possession or consumption by the underage person(s) at any event that s/he is hosting on public or private property.

Under this ordinance, the social host does not have to be present at the party, event or gathering to be criminally responsible.

What Is an “Event or Gathering”? 
An “event or gathering” means a group of persons who have assembled on private property or in a public place for a social occasion or a social activity.

What Steps Should You Take to Be a Responsible Social Host?
The steps you take to protect your guests, yourself and others will reduce your exposure to alcohol-related liability. If you are hosting a party where persons under 21 years of age are present, you should...
1. Verify the age of guests.
2. Control access to alcohol.
3. Control the quantity of alcohol.
4. Supervise persons under 21 years of age.
5. Be courteous to your neighbors and keep the party noise down.
6. Refuse entrance to uninvited guests, especially the ones who arrive at the door with alcohol or are already intoxicated.
7. Call the Police for assistance with uninvited guests.

What Is the Penalty for Violating this Ordinance? 
A violation of this ordinance is a misdemeanor, subject to a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and/or a $1,000 fine.

Are There Any Exceptions? 
The ordinance does not apply to...
- Conduct solely between an underage person and his/ her parents in the parent’s household.
- Legally protected religious observances.
- Facilities otherwise licensed (bars, liquor stores, etc.).
- Situations where underage persons are lawfully in possession of alcohol during the course of employment.
- Law enforcement activities supervised by a law enforcement agency.
- Landlord, mortgagee, college, university, hotel/motel owner and operator who has not actually participated in hosting or allowing the party where alcohol is present.

Isn’t Underage Drinking Already Illegal? 
• Yes. Minnesota law prohibits minors under age 21 from purchasing, possessing or consuming alcohol. It also prohibits adults from furnishing alcohol to minors.

Why Is There A Need for this Ordinance? 
• This law was enacted to prevent underage drinking parties and hold the hosts of such parties accountable since many youth obtain alcohol through social sources such as older friends, siblings, parents and/or strangers.

• It is worded carefully to target chronic offenders whose guests’ behavior disturbs their neighbors, damages property and/or jeopardizes their own or others’ safety.

Will I Be Held Liable if I Am Away for the Weekend and my Kids Have a Party At My Home? 
• No. If you did not know about the party, event or gathering.

• Yes. If you knew about the party or had reason to know that underage drinking was occurring and did nothing to prevent it.

If My Housemate Hosts a Party in Our Apartment While I Am Away, Can I Still Be Held Criminally Liable? 
• Maybe. It depends on what knowledge you have about the party and what actions if any you took to prevent it.

Can I Be Held Liable if my Tenant Has an Underage Drinking Party on My Property? 
• Maybe. It depends on whether or not you actually participated in hosting or allowing the party where alcohol was present.

I Live in a Dorm Room and Have a Party. Can I Be Held Criminally Liable? 
• Yes. Since you control your room, the ordinance applies.