

Environmental Prevention of Underage Drinking

Restricted Sales of Alcohol at Public Events

What are restricted sales of alcohol at public events?

Alcohol restrictions at public events include policies that control the availability and use of alcohol at concerts, street fairs, sporting games and tailgate parties, and other public venues. Restrictions can be voluntary or mandated by local legislation.

How do restricted sales of alcohol at public events reduce underage drinking and its consequences?

Underage youth can easily get alcohol at community events by buying it directly or by having friends over age 21 buy it for them. In response, tighter controls on alcohol availability have been shown to reduce underage drinking. Some evidence indicates that sales restrictions at public events also may reduce alcohol-related problems, such as traffic crashes, vandalism, fighting, and other public disturbances.

How can my community take this action?

Take the following steps to initiate or strengthen restrictions on the sale of alcohol at public events:

- **Determine whether your community has restrictions related to the sale of alcohol at public events.** If such restrictions are in place, evaluate their strengths, weaknesses, and enforcement. Whether or not restrictions exist, gather information about any alcohol-related problems associated with specific public events. This information will be helpful in promoting such ordinances.
- **Address the sale of alcohol at public events.** Consider the following components for alcohol sales restrictions:
 - Restrict the issuance of licenses at youth- and family-related community events;
 - Restrict or prohibit alcohol sponsorship for community events;
 - Ban the sale of alcohol at events and locations that are popular with underage youth;
 - Enforce strict conditions for alcohol sales and consumption, such as:
 - Designating restricted drinking sections at special events where young people are not allowed;
 - Requiring responsible beverage service (RBS) management policies and training for workers at public events;
 - Limiting the cup size and servings of alcohol per person; and
 - Using easily recognizable cups for alcoholic beverages;

- Prohibit open containers in unsupervised public locations;
- Enforce alcohol restrictions vigorously both at public events and in public places;
- Establish standard procedures for dealing with intoxicated persons in public areas and at community events; and
- Require permits contingent on strict stipulations and RBS guidelines for private parties in public places.
- **Build community support for restricted sales of alcohol at public events from event organizers, law enforcement, and other community members.** Public awareness activities can help the community understand the relationship between unrestricted sales of alcohol and the alcohol-related problems that occur.
- **Measure and report successful outcomes.** Some measures of the effectiveness of restricted sales of alcohol at public events are:
 - Rate of complaints from neighborhoods about public events;
 - Number of event-specific law enforcement actions, such as alcohol-related arrests;
 - Rates of alcohol-related crashes, injuries, and fatalities; and
 - Enforcement of driving under the influence laws.

Resources Supporting Action

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). *The Health Communicator's Social Media Toolkit*. From http://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/ToolsTemplates/SocialMediaToolkit_BM.pdf (accessed December 15, 2013).

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2010). *Focus on Prevention*. From <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA10-4120/SMA10-4120.pdf> (accessed December 15, 2013).

University of Minnesota Alcohol Epidemiology Program. (2012). Community Festivals Materials. From <http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/festivals/index.shtm> (accessed December 15, 2013).

About Environmental Prevention

Environmental prevention focuses on changing the environment in ways that make alcohol less available and appealing to young people. Some goals of environmental prevention are to change social norms or attitudes relating to the use of alcohol, to restrict youth access to alcohol, and to strengthen enforcement of laws and regulations governing its use. Environmental prevention of underage drinking also includes:

- Alcohol compliance checks;
- Controls on alcohol outlet location and density;
- Graduated driver licensing laws;
- Increased taxes on sales of alcohol;
- Responsible beverage service;
- Restrictions on low-price, high-volume drink specials;
- Sobriety and traffic safety checkpoints; and
- Social host liability laws.

Visit <https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/townhallmeetings> for more information.

Materials to support national Town Hall Meetings on the prevention of underage drinking are provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.