

SOCIAL HOST YOUR ROLE IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE...

11th Grade Brown County students who report binge drinking in the past 30 days:

21%

of females

28%

of males

Compared to the Minnesota average:

14%

of females

18%

of males

It's the law for a reason

The earlier drinking starts, the more danger it poses. People reporting first time use of alcohol before age 15 were more than five times more likely to have past year alcohol dependence or abuse compared with people who first used alcohol at age 21 or older.

On the other hand, research shows that a child who gets through age 21 without smoking, abusing alcohol or using illegal drugs is virtually certain never to do so.

Consequences

- alcohol poisonings
- brain damage
- chronic alcohol addiction
- traffic crashes
- property damage
- community disturbance
- risky sexual behavior and sexual assault
- suspension from school sports or extra-curricular activities

In other words, if it's your property, it's your problem.

Social host ordinances give communities a practical tool for holding adults accountable. When law enforcement officials arrive on the scene of an underage drinking party, it's often difficult to determine who provided the alcohol. Therefore, laws that prohibit furnishing alcohol to youth under 21 can be hard to enforce. With social host liability, the focus is on where the drinking takes place, rather than who provided the alcohol.

The prospects of being held liable for underage drinking parties can:

- Act as an effective deterrent
- Provide incentive for hosts to be vigilant
- Encourage parents to prevent parties while away
- Hold underage youth partially accountable
- Recover costs of law enforcement's need to repeatedly respond to the same party site
- Officially establish the city's zero-tolerance policy

Bottom Line:

Hosting at home does not change the facts or lessen the dangers. Underage drinking is a major public health issue and cause for concern.

...IN PREVENTING UNDERAGE DRINKING.

“What exactly do you mean by responsible?”

Holding Hosts Responsible

Where a personal sense of responsibility fails, legal accountability can step in. Through social host liability laws, adults can be held responsible for underage drinking parties, regardless of who furnished the alcohol.

New Ulm, Sleepy Eye, Springfield & Comfrey Social Host Ordinances

Section 8.84. Hosting gathering at which underage alcohol possession or consumption occurs.

Subdivision 1. Purpose.

This section is enacted pursuant to Minn. Stat. 145A.05, **Subd. 1**, to protect public health and safety and discourage underage possession and consumption of alcohol by holding persons criminally responsible who host events or gatherings at which underage persons possess or consume alcohol, regardless of whether the host supplied the alcohol.

Subd. 3. Prohibited acts. It is unlawful for any person to host an event or gathering, at any location, at which:

Alcohol beverages are present; and the person knows, or reasonably should know, that any underage person will or does consume any alcoholic beverage or possess any alcoholic beverage with the intent to consume it; and
the person fails to take reasonable steps to prevent possession or consumption by the underage person. Violation of Subdivision 3 of this section is a misdemeanor.

For complete social ordinance language please go to www.usacbrowncounty.org.

Social host ordinances give communities a practical tool for holding adults accountable for underage drinking. These laws allow law enforcement to cite individuals who hosted an underage drinking party on their property.

ENFORCING LIABILITY AT THE STATE LEVEL

Social host liability can be defined as a criminal act, or in terms of civil liability.

CRIMINAL ACTS:

- Enforced through criminal prosecution
- Punishable by fines, imprisonment or both

CIVIL LIABILITY:

- Injured parties seek monetary damages from host
- Settled through litigation brought against host by injured parties

Well-meaning parents often host drinking parties on behalf of their children, either in the belief they can control the amount of alcohol a teen consumes or because they consider teen drinking inevitable and that their supervision can ensure the safety of the children involved. Truth is, once revelers start drinking and the party begins to grow in size, it can quickly spiral out of control and lead to devastating consequences.

This brochure was developed (in part) under a grant number 2H79SP020600-06 from the Office of National Drug Control Policy and SAMHSA, U.S. DHHS. The views, policies and opinions expressed are those expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of ONDCP, SAMHSA or HHS.

Social Host Ordinance

NEW ULM • SLEEPY EYE
SPRINGFIELD • COMFREY

***What you need to know before
you host a party for anyone
under the age of 21***



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