

## Alcohol Laws

With graduation parties and summer festivities just around the corner, it's important for families to put safety first and follow laws related to alcohol consumption. While it may be tempting to try and be the "cool" parent, doing so can put lives at risk and/or result in significant legal problems. Know the law, and help save lives.

### Social Host Law

Parents who allow underage drinking in their homes could face arrest and prosecution under the Social Host Law. It's a Class B misdemeanor to provide alcohol to a minor, or a place for minors to drink, including the adult's house and any property they own, rent or control, including a hotel. Penalties could include a fine of up to \$1,000 and up to 180 days in jail. With a prior conviction, the penalties increase to up to a \$5,000 fine and 1 year in jail. If serious bodily injury or death results, the penalty increases to 6 months to 2 ½ years in jail, and up to a \$10,000 fine. Civil liabilities can be in the tens of thousands of dollars.

The intent of the Social Host Law is to protect minors and the larger community. The penalty may be a deterrent, but the real reasons to forbid underage kids from drinking is that it's damaging to their health, and thousands of people in the United States are injured or killed each year due to alcohol-related crashes involving teenage drivers.

### The Indiana Lifeline Law

Although our goal should always be to prevent underage alcohol consumption, in the event that it does happen, the Indiana Lifeline Law helps protect minors when alcohol consumption endangers a friend. Within the State of Indiana, the Lifeline Law provides immunity for the crimes of public intoxication, minor in possession, minor in consumption, and similar laws, to persons who call 911 and cooperate with law enforcement while seeking medical assistance for a person suffering from an alcohol-related health emergency. The Lifeline Law does not condone underage drinking or limit the ability to prosecute for other criminal offenses such as providing alcohol to minors, operating vehicles while intoxicated, or the possession of a controlled substance.

### Overconsumption—Know the Signs

It is impossible to accurately determine if someone is passed out or dying. Even doctors need medical equipment to fully assess these situations. If any one of the following signs, or a combination of these signs, is observed, call 911 immediately:

- Acting unusually confused
- Repetitively throwing up
- Breathing is different than normal
- Skin looks pale or bluish
- Loss of bodily functions
- Snoring unusually or loudly
- Passed out (meaning you can't wake the person up to an alert state)

The focus of the above laws is saving lives. It's imperative that parents have frequent conversations with their kids about the dangers of underage drinking, and never provide alcohol to minors. Stay aware and involved to help make this a fun and safe summer of 2019.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.DrugFreeAdamsCounty.org](http://www.DrugFreeAdamsCounty.org).