

Social Host Ordinances

North Coastal Prevention Coalition

January 2008

QUICK FACTS:

- In California, the total cost of alcohol use by youth, including traffic crashes, violent crime, burns, drowning, suicide attempts, fetal alcohol syndrome, alcohol poisoning and treatment is more than \$6.5 billion per year (PIRE, in support of OJJDP Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program, 1999).
- Nearly 40% of 11th graders in Tri-City schools report using alcohol in the past month compared to less than 20% using cigarettes or marijuana (CHKS, 2007).
- 65% of youth surveyed said that they got the alcohol they drank from family and friends (Century Council, 2003).
- Alcohol is responsible for 73% of substance abuse-related emergency room admissions at the Tri-City Medical Center for ages 10-17 (TCMC 2000-2004).
- State law does not prevent local governments from imposing criminal or civil liability upon adults who allow premises under their control to be used for underage drinking parties (Alcohol Policy Panel).
- 17 of 19 San Diego County jurisdictions have passed some kind of Social Host ordinance.

Working To Hold Hosts Of Underage drinking Parties Accountable



There are approximately 20,000 high school students in the Tri-City region of Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Vista. According to the 2007 California Healthy Kids Survey, many of these teens drink alcohol on a regular basis — **over 40% of Tri-City 11th graders and about 30% of 9th graders have been very sick or drunk from drinking.**

Teen parties are a primary avenue for underage drinking for high school and college students and are often linked to binge drinking. Mayer, Forster, Murray, and Wagenaar (1998) found that the most common setting for drinking among high school seniors was at a private home.

Why is underage drinking so prevalent in private settings?

Regulatory Strategies for Preventing Youth Access to Alcohol: Best Practices (PIRE, 1999) observes: "This tolerance apparently stems from three misconceptions or beliefs:

Myth #1: Alcohol, particularly beer, is relatively harmless compared to illegal drugs, and its consumption is part of the passage to adulthood.

Fact: Alcohol is a key factor in the three leading causes of death among young people in America: traffic crashes, homicides, and suicides.

Myth #2: Permitting consumption in a residential setting is safer than having it occur in open areas, where

there is a higher risk of problems.

Fact: Research shows that kids whose parents or friends' parents provide alcohol for teen get-togethers are more likely to engage in heavier drinking, to drink more often, and to get into traffic crashes.

Myth #3: Teen drinking is inevitable, and it is safer if it occurs in a controlled, residential setting.

Fact: Parents who provide alcohol to underage youth send a message that drinking, with or without adult supervision, is OK, which subtly encourages drinking elsewhere.

Social Host Ordinances Bridge the Gap

Isn't underage drinking already illegal? State law prohibits minors under age 21 from purchasing, possessing or consuming alcohol in public. It also prohibits adults from giving alcohol to minors in public. The Social Host ordinance closes the gap in state law since many youth obtain alcohol on private property, through social

sources such as older friends, siblings, parents and/or strangers. This law was put in place to prevent underage drinking parties and hold the hosts of such parties accountable.

What is a Social Host? A social host is a person of any age who hosts or allows a party, gathering or event

where minors are consuming alcohol. A "party, gathering or event" means a group of persons who have assembled for a social occasion or a social activity.

Are there any exceptions?

The ordinance does not apply to parents supervising their own children (during private meals and/or religious ceremonies, for example).



Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence.



Age of Drinking Onset Predicts Future Alcohol Abuse and Dependence

Despite a minimum legal drinking age of 21, many young people in the United States consume alcohol. Some abuse alcohol by drinking frequently or by binge drinking - often defined as having five or more drinks in a row on one occasion. A minority of youth may even meet the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders criteria for alcohol dependence.

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the younger the age of drinking onset, the greater the chance that an individual at some point in life will develop an alcohol disorder.

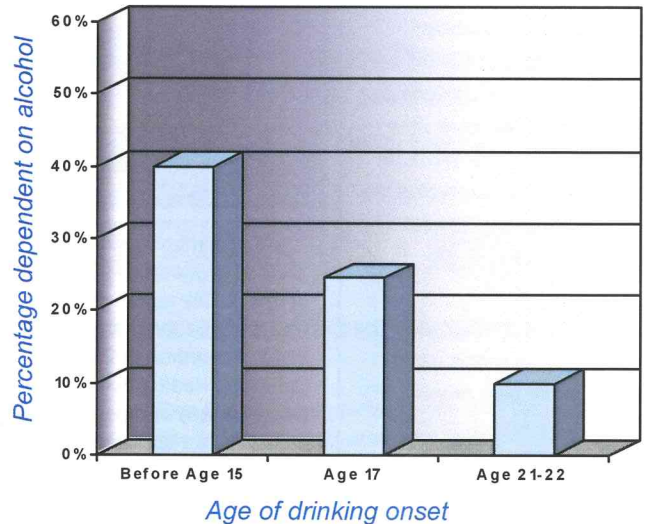
Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are

four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence (commonly known as alcoholism) than those who begin drinking at age 21.

Around 30% of 9th graders in Tri-city schools report using alcohol in the past 30 days.

Underage Drinkers More Likely to Develop Alcohol Dependence

(Grant, B.F. 1998. National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)



YOU can be part of the solution:

- ✓ Report underage drinking parties before they start.
- ✓ Contact your local law enforcement agency to report parties or gatherings where minors have access to alcohol.
- ✓

Oceanside Police Dept:
760-435-4900

Vista Sheriff's
Non-emergency:
760-940-4300

Highlights of the Oceanside and Vista Social Host Ordinances

- The purpose of social host ordinances are to reduce youth access to alcohol on private property through social sources such as older friends, siblings, parents, or strangers.
- Makes it a misdemeanor (\$1,000 fine and/or up to 6 months in jail) for a person to allow or host a party, gathering or event at his or her place of residence or other private property where 3 or more minors are present and alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs are being consumed by any minor. Also provides for cost recovery of law enforcement services.
- Defines person(s) responsible for event as a person of any age who hosts or allows a party, gathering or event where minors are consuming alcohol. The person could be someone who owns, rents, leases, or otherwise has control of the premises where the party, gathering or event takes place
- Oceanside's amended ordinance includes steps to ensure you are a responsible host:
 - ✓ Control quantity and access of alcohol at the gathering.
 - ✓ Verify the age of persons attending the gathering by inspecting legal, government issued ID.
 - ✓ Supervise the activities of persons under 21 years of age.

A Community-wide Approach to Enhance the Effectiveness of the Social Host Law

Social Host ordinances are a valuable community tool to send a clear message that public officials are serious about reducing underage drinking at home parties. To make these laws effective, however, requires support and diligence by organizations who are responsible for implementing and enforcing these laws, as well as schools, parents, and the community as a whole. The following are some strategies that can assist these groups in reducing social availability of alcohol to underage youth at home parties.

Neighbors:

- Report loud or unruly gatherings to local law enforcement. Many times it is only through these complaints that police hear about underage drinking parties.

Parents:

- Check with other parents to make sure alcohol won't be at a home party and don't let your son/daughter go to a home party where alcohol is likely to be available to minors.
- Don't host or allow your son/daughter to host a party where alcohol or other drugs will be available to minors.
- Don't purchase alcohol for minors and/or illegally provide it to them.

Teens:

- Know the laws and risks involved with underage drinking.
- Be a positive role model and choose to have fun without alcohol.

Schools:

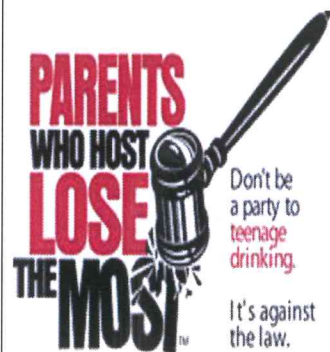
- Hold educational forums for parents which review and identify underage alcohol laws and liability concerns.

City Officials:

- Make public statements about the importance preventing underage drinking.
- Support local prevention organizations in conducting public education campaigns.
- Provide resources to enforce local social host ordinances and other efforts to prevent underage drinking.

Law Enforcement:

- Train officers on how to enforce social host ordinances.
- Adopt and publicize policies for detecting and terminating underage drinking parties.
- Implement enforcement programs to deter adults from providing alcohol to minors.



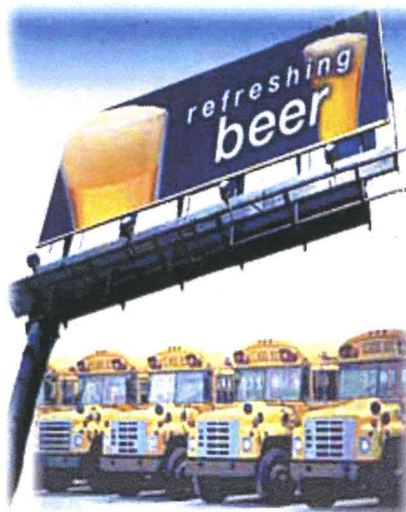
Changing A Community's Norm of Underage Drinking

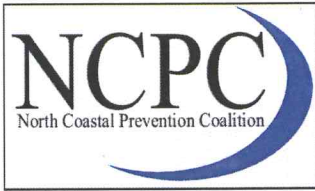
Borrowing the slogan from *Ohio Parents for Drug-Free Youth*, the Tri-City Prevention Collaborative launched the **"Parents Who Host, Lose the Most"** campaign in the high schools of Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Vista in 2001 with the assistance and support of school districts, parent organizations, and law enforcement. The goal of the campaign was to create a community standard that neither accepts nor condones youth drinking.

Since its inception, over **10,000** parents have pledged that **"all events for youth in my home will be chaperoned and free of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs."** Parents making this pledge with their teens need the broader community to support and reinforce the message that underage drinking is not a "rite of passage."

Social Host Ordinances- Just One Component of Preventing Underage Drinking

Social Host ordinances address merely one component of the underage drinking problem. Minors are bombarded with the normalization of drinking alcohol through advertisements, low cost alcohol, and products geared towards youth such as alcopops and "Pocket Shots." Teens see more ads for alcohol on TV than they do for jeans, sneakers, potato chips and pretzels, gum or makeup COMBINED (camy.org, 2005). To learn how you can do more to prevent underage drinking, contact us or visit the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at camy.org, Center for Science in the Public Interest at cspinet.org/alcohol, or the Marin Institute at marininstitute.org.





Serving the cities of Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Vista.

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The Mission of the North Coastal Prevention Coalition is to reduce the harm of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs in the cities of Carlsbad, Oceanside and Vista through community action, education, support and collaboration.

The Tri-City Prevention Collaborative (TCPC) is a project of the North Coastal Prevention Coalition, with Vista Community Clinic serving as the fiscal agent. Funds are provided by the County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Alcohol and Drug Services. The goal of TCPC is to reduce the harm of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs in the cities of Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Vista.

The Drug Free Communities Program is a project of the North Coastal Prevention Coalition, with Vista Community Clinic serving as the fiscal agent. Funds are provided by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) under contract #SP12300.

Broad-Based Support for Social Host Ordinances

The following are just some of the groups and organizations that support "Social Host" ordinances:

- Able-Disabled Advocacy
- Department of Emergency Medical Services
- Institute for Public Strategies
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving
- North Coastal Prevention Coalition
- North Coastal Prevention Youth Coalition
- North County Health Services
- Oceanside Police Department
- San Diego County Council on Alcohol Policy (SanDCCAP)
- San Diego County Policy Panel on Youth Access to Alcohol
- San Diego Police Department
- San Dieguito Alliance for Drug Free Youth
- Vista Community Clinic
- 9th District PTA

San Diego County jurisdictions that have adopted "social host" or adult accountability ordinances:

- County of San Diego (July 2003, amended July 2006)
- City of Chula Vista (April 2007)
- City of Coronado (September 2003)
- City of El Cajon (May 2003, amended November 2007)
- City of Encinitas (June 2003)
- City of Escondido (May 2003)
- City of Imperial Beach (September 2003)
- City of La Mesa (May 2003, amended September 2006)
- City of Lemon Grove (August 2003)
- National City (November 2003)
- City of Oceanside (May 2003, amended March 2007)
- City of Poway (October 2002, amended May 2004)
- City of San Diego (April 2003, amended June 2006)
- City of San Marcos (February 2006)
- City of Santee (August 2003)
- City of Solana Beach (October 2003)
- City of Vista (October 2003)