



MEDIA RELEASE

Investigative Unit

Ohio Investigative Unit • Robert W. Booker Jr., Executive Director
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HAVE FUN AT PROM, BUT BE SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE

(Columbus) – Over the next few weeks, many of Ohio's young adults will be celebrating their high school proms. Prom is a rite of passage high school students look forward to each year.

Undercover agents with the Ohio Investigative Unit are taking an active role in enforcing Ohio's alcohol laws during this prom season. Agents throughout Ohio will be conducting compliance checks on liquor permit premises, educating Ohio's high school students through Sober Truth classes, and working with local alcohol coalitions and law enforcement to bring awareness to the dangers of underage drinking.

"We want our students and parents to have fun and enjoy this time; however, be responsible," said Executive Director Robert W. Booker, Jr. "Our goal is to make sure it is a safe time for everyone and that no lives are lost due to underage consumption of alcohol."

Agents want to remind liquor permit premises to watch for underage individuals attempting to purchase beer – often with a false identification. Clerks should also watch for individuals 21 and over purchasing alcohol for a person who is not yet 21. In Ohio it is illegal to share in the cost of purchasing alcoholic beverages, or attempts to do so – even if the sale is refused.

Anyone convicted of attempting to purchase alcohol as a minor, sharing in the cost, using false identification or furnishing alcohol to a minor may face a maximum sentence of six months in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine.

Anyone under 21 years of age who is caught driving with a blood alcohol concentration between .02 percent and .08 percent can be arrested. If convicted, the individual could have his or her driver license suspended for at least 90 days, up to a maximum of two years. Also, four points would be added to their driving record.

Parents who are hosting a party for their child's friends should also be aware of Ohio's laws and how they could impact them. In the state of Ohio, parents cannot give alcohol to others' children who are under 21, even in their own home with the other parents' permission. Parents also cannot knowingly allow minors other than their own children to consume alcohol in their home.

Agents are asking for local hotels and limousine companies to be vigilant and report underage drinking and parties to local authorities.

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The Ohio Investigative Unit is a division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. Agents are undercover sworn peace officers who enforce the state's liquor and tobacco laws, as well as food stamp fraud. Individuals who believe food stamp fraud is being committed are encouraged to contact OIU toll-free at 1-877-4MINORS. All complaints will remain anonymous.