



MEDIA RELEASE

Investigative Unit

Ohio Investigative Unit • Glenn Taylor, Executive Director
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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OIU REMINDS OHIOANS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING LAWS

COLUMBUS – This is an exciting time for high school seniors, as well as friends and family, taking part in all of the festivities surrounding graduation. This time of celebration can easily turn to a time of tragedy because of the increased prevalence of underage drinking, as teens may be tempted to drink at graduation celebrations.

“I commend those who make the wise and mature decision to not participate in illegal and dangerous behavior,” said Ohio Investigative Unit Executive Director Glenn Taylor. “Parents and administrators have the best opportunity to influence decisions and attitudes. To help foster safe choices, parents and teens need to understand Ohio’s underage drinking laws.”

Parents may not provide alcohol to children who are under 21, even in their own home with the other parents' permission. Those convicted of providing alcohol to a person under 21 years of age face maximum sentences of six months in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine. Law enforcement may also confiscate any alcohol, money or property used in committing these offenses.

It is illegal to share in the cost of purchasing alcoholic beverages, or to attempt to purchase alcohol, even if the sale is refused. The penalty for attempting to purchase an alcoholic beverage for underage individuals is a maximum fine of \$250 and/or up to 30 days in jail. Anyone who purchases, sells or gives alcoholic beverages to under-aged individuals can be sent to jail.

If you are under 21 years of age and are caught driving with a blood alcohol concentration between .02 percent and .08 percent, a level that can be reached after just one or two drinks, you can be arrested. Punishment is suspension of your driver license for at least 90 days up to a maximum of two years, plus four points added to your driving record. Having an open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle is also illegal.

We must continue to work together to stop the senseless tragedies associated with irresponsible and illegal underage alcohol consumption. If you have information about a bar, store or carryout selling beer and/or liquor to persons under the age of 21, please notify us by calling the department’s toll-free hotline at 1-877-4MINORS. Ohio Investigative Unit agents will investigate every complaint. Working together, we can protect Ohio’s young people and make this the safest graduation season yet.

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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.