

From the Office of the Sheriff:

Recently you may have heard a media campaign targeted towards teenage drinking. The "Parents Who Host, Lose the Most" is a collaborated effort between parents, educators, community members, and law enforcement to reduce the acceptability of underage drinking in our communities. With high school graduation season upon us, there is no better time to enhance our understanding of the risks involved for those that drink while underage, as well as those that procure.

To our teenagers or those that have yet to attain the legal drinking age of 21. Should you get caught drinking, your first offense starts at \$249.00 and fines continue to rise, with your fourth offense just \$753.00. The financial toll is just the start as you will see a mandatory suspension of your driving privileges for up to two years. You will also see your insurance rates increase.

Now, be foolish enough to operate a motor vehicle to get home from the party, add \$375.00 and four points to your driving record for Absolute Sobriety violations. Should you happen to have a friend under the age of 16 with you, oooouch! That will cost you another \$1,118.00. Add a citation for the six-pack you have with you in the car, another \$249.00, have one open – another \$249.00.

Underage drinking is no joke and historically we see an increase during the graduation season. Alcohol is easily accessible during these graduation parties, at many too easy. I would like to share some of the programs tips for parents if your teen is attending a party. 1) Make certain the host will not be serving alcohol. If they are, how they are going to handle the situation when teens show up? 2) Know how your teen is getting to and from the party, reinforcing that they never ride with someone that has been drinking or done drugs. 3) Assure your teen that they can call you if they need to be picked. 4) Know your teen's friends and parents and find out their policies on drinking.

If you are hosting the party. 1) Pass out invitations and try to avoid the "open" invitations (uninvited teens). 2) Set the rules regarding alcohol, party start and stop times. 3) Have plenty of food and non-alcoholic beverages. 4) Invite other parents to assist in chaperoning if there will be a large number of teenagers present. If there is a party at your house and anyone there provides alcohol for juveniles (children other than your own) you are violating State Statute 125.07 (1). Fines range from \$500.00 – 10,000.00 and up to nine months in county jail.

Nothing will tarnish a day of celebration more than a teenager who has been drinking getting into a car crash and seriously hurting, or worse, killing another. We do investigate these types of crashes at length and it will not be difficult to track the offender back to the origin of the alcohol. We all want to please our children and ensure they have a great party. Procuring and providing alcohol to teens or your teen's friends is not the way to win their hearts. Even with their parent's permission, it is ILLEGAL to serve children other than your own!

Wisconsin has the highest rate of underage drinking and current alcohol use among high school students in the country, not a fact we should be proud of. Let's promise to make our county

safe, do not drink and drive, and don't let other's drink and drive. Thanks for listening
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