

Social Host Ordinance

Preventing Underage Drinking in Huntington Beach

Underage drinking costs 4,700 lives a year. (CDC, 2012)

*Allowing it in your home could cost you a **\$750 fine**.*

What is a Social Host Ordinance?

Teen drinking parties are not just a nuisance, but also a threat to public safety. Recognizing this, the City Council of Huntington Beach adopted a Social Host Ordinance on March 4, 2013. The law prohibits adults from hosting drinking parties for minors.

"It is unlawful and a public nuisance for a responsible person or host to cause or allow a party, gathering or event to occur at any residence or other private property at which any underage person is being served, is in possession of, or is consuming an alcoholic beverage..." Huntington Beach Municipal Code



Penalties

Violators will be cited and may face a \$750 fine. If police are called out a second time within 12 months, violators face an additional \$1,500 fine. The third violation in 12 months carries a fine of up to \$3,000.

Why Not Host Parties for Minors?

Some parents believe that providing alcohol for teens will keep the situation under control and teach their children to drink responsibly. However, a recent study of over 6,000 youth found that teens who received alcohol from a parent or a friend's parent at a party consumed more drinks, and were twice as likely to drink regularly and binge drink (Foley, et al.). Additionally, teens frequently have harmful experiences at parent-sanctioned drinking parties. Even when parents keep an eye on teens while they drink, young people may still get behind the wheel or get into a car with someone who has been drinking. Huntington Beach has adopted a Social Host Ordinance to help prevent these drinking-related tragedies.

What You Can Do

If you see a loud party where persons under 21 appear to be drinking, call the police.

If you are hosting a party where alcohol is being served, monitor your alcohol and make sure no minors are drinking. Call the police if minors refuse to cooperate or the party becomes unmanageable. **You will not be cited if you request police assistance before someone else files a complaint.**