

Partnership Pieces May 31, 2007



Owners, Not Clerks Should Be Accountable for Underage Alcohol Sales, City Says

The city of Racine, Wis., has announced a policy change that will see liquor outlet owners -- not clerks -- slapped with hefty fines when alcohol is sold to minors. Previously, clerks who sold alcohol to underage buyers were hit with a \$536 fine, but now the Racine Police Department will issue the ticket to the store or bar owners, instead. "It's really the owner's responsibility to train their employees and control their employees and it's their license," said Racine Police Capt. Carl Pavidonis. "If we keep citing clerks, there's really no incentive for the agent to abide by the law." A series of compliance checks in the Racine area over the past few years have failed to cut the rate of alcohol sales to minors, experts say, with about a quarter of establishments selling to underage drinkers. "After we had the five rounds, we really had a sense of pattern," said Mary Esther Schnaubelt, project coordinator of the group Focus on Community, which is involved in alcohol-sale compliance issues. "It definitely says we need to change the way we're approaching the problem ... The hope is that will put the responsibility where it lies ... and encourage store owners to train their clerks, help them so they know the right procedures to follow on how to prevent underage sales."

Confused Retailers Sell Alcoholic Energy Drinks to Kids

Some retailers in Kentucky inadvertently sold alcoholic energy drinks to underage youth after confusing the products with nonalcoholic energy drinks. The [Kentucky Office of Alcoholic Beverage Control's](#) (ABC) Enforcement Division found that some store clerks don't recognize energy drinks containing alcohol because the packaging is so similar to that of regular energy drinks. Officials said the alcoholic drinks look more like other energy drinks than other alcoholic beverages. "This new line of alcoholic beverage product is extremely similar in look and feel to the popular energy drinks that contain no alcohol," said ABC Executive Director Chris Lilly. "It is critical that servers, sellers, and consumers know and understand the difference. Our youth are at risk when clerks and retailers can not differentiate between nonalcoholic and alcoholic beverages being sold." Kentucky officials noted that while retailers are still subject to penalties for inadvertently selling alcohol-infused energy drinks to underage customers, the ABC is adding information about energy drinks to its server-training program.

Pediatricians Call for Stronger Steps on Movie Smoking

Saying that recent movie industry steps to limit youth exposure to smoking scenes don't go far enough, the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (AAP) is calling for a ban on all non-historical portrayals of smoking in movies accessible to children and youth. The [Motion Picture Association of America](#) (MPAA), responding to pressure from public-health groups and regulators, recently announced that it would consider smoking as a factor when deciding whether to rate movies R, or restricted to patrons ages 17 and older unless accompanied by an adult. But pediatricians are concerned that the policy change will not adequately protect children from on-screen smoking, and called on the MPAA to place a R rating on all new films that portray smoking, except for films depicting historical figures who actually smoked. The AAP also called on the movie industry to place antismoking messages before all films that depict smoking and eliminate tobacco brand identification and product-placement arrangements.

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