



**PUBLIC HEALTH
SAUK COUNTY**
Coalitions for Community
Health Improvement



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City of Reedsburg Retailers Pass Compliance Checks

(Reedsburg, Wisconsin) – Do local stores and bars sell alcohol to youth under age 21? To find out, the Sauk County Partnership for Prevention coalition worked jointly with Reedsburg Police Department. They conducted compliance checks in January 2024 at licensed alcohol retailers across Reedsburg. In these checks, underage buyers use their own Wisconsin ID to attempt to purchase alcohol.

Law Enforcement and volunteer youth buyers completed 24 checks. Of these, 15 retailers did not sell to underage buyers, resulting in a 63% compliance rate. However, 9 retailers sold illegally to underage buyers. The number of retailers who sold to underage buyers increased from 5 in June 2023 to 9 in January 2024. In 2023, ahead of checks, the coalition sent retailers notice of inspection and educational materials on how to check IDs properly.

“We applaud so many of our retailers who take their responsibility seriously and refuse illegal sales to minors,” said Chief Patrick Cummings. “By enforcing our local alcohol laws, we’re keeping our community and kids safe.”

The goal of the compliance check program is to encourage compliance with state and local alcohol laws. Research shows that conducting compliance checks at least twice per year over multiple years can reduce illegal sales to young people. Retailers can use education materials available through the Department of Revenue to train their employees to check IDs properly and not sell to minors.

Wisconsin law prohibits the sale of alcohol to anyone under the age of 21. Selling illegally to minors can result in up to a \$500 fine for first offenders, with increasing fines and possible jail time or alcohol license suspension for repeat offenders.

“We need everyone’s help to confront the negative impacts of alcohol in our community,” said Kate Stough, Health Educator with Sauk County Partnership for Prevention. “Responsible retailers who join us in preventing underage drinking are making our communities healthier places to grow up.”



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Wisconsin's underage drinking and adult drinking rates are higher than state and national averages. In 2021, 29% of Sauk County high school students reported drinking in the past month, compared to 25% of all Wisconsin high school students and 23% of all high school students nationwide. Wisconsin adults (age 18+) also drink more than the national average. In 2022, 62% of all Wisconsin adults reported drinking in the past month compared to 55% of all United States adults.

"Alcohol is a serious safety and public health issue requiring collaboration, education, and effective policies," said Jessie Phalen, Coalition Chair of the Sauk County Partnership for Prevention.

Compliance checks are only one part of a larger strategy to reduce youth access to alcohol. The Sauk County Partnership for Prevention coalition meets monthly to reduce and prevent youth use of alcohol and vapes. Meetings are open to the public, and all are welcome. For more information about the Sauk County Partnership for Prevention or to join the coalition, visit their website at www.P4PSauk.org.