

# Cheltenham Communities That Care

## SOCIAL HOST LAWS

**Social Host Laws** protect youth by reducing and preventing underage drinking. Social Hosts are those who welcome and entertain visitors at business and social gatherings. They are responsible for the safety of their guests, including preventing both known and suspected underage individuals (including their own children in their own home), from consuming alcohol, regardless of who actually purchased or provided the alcohol.

### Retail And Social Access To Alcohol

**Retail access to alcohol** refers to commercial establishments where customers can purchase alcohol for consumption. Social Host Laws associated with Retail Hosts apply to any business that sells alcohol, including restaurants, bars, taverns, state stores, alcohol distributors, and vendors (such as in stadiums and at community events). These regulations are more rigid than Social Host Laws for private citizens.

**Social access to alcohol** refers to a person/people giving alcohol, usually without cost, to another. The alcohol may be obtained through parents/caregivers, other family members, friends, friends of family, and/or acquaintances at parties, get-togethers, private residences, celebrations, and community events.

**Social Host Responsibility and Liability** apply to all hosts who either knowingly or through negligence, give alcohol to someone underage or someone suspected of being underage, as well as already intoxicated individuals.

Social Hosts can be charged with **criminal and/or civil offenses** if:

- Proper identification is not checked.
- Legal drinking age is ignored.
- There is a lack of good judgement.
- Minors take alcohol without permission and/or sneak it into a residence to consume it.
- Alcohol continues to be provided to inebriated individuals.
- Behaviors of underage and intoxicated guests result in car accidents, injuries, death, property damage, violations, and/or fines.



**Penalties for Social Hosts**, as well as underage/intoxicated individuals, can include hefty fines, permanent or temporary loss of a driver's license, law suits, required education classes, jail time, probation, and even compensation to emergency services, hospitals/medical care, and law enforcement.



### **Potential Harm To Youth Goes Beyond Parental Permissiveness**

Some parents/caregivers feel that if they supervise a graduation, prom, or other party, then an exception can be made to allow underage party-goers to celebrate with alcohol, especially if car keys are taken away and guests sleep over or are driven home. However:

- Even under adult supervision, allowing underage youth to drink alcohol is against the law.
- Even if youth don't drive after consuming alcohol, injuries and property damage can still result from falls and poor behavior choices.
- As a result of parents/caregivers making a one-time exception for drinking, youth can get the impression that underage drinking is acceptable for special occasions and under certain circumstances, leading them to bend the rules for other situations, as well.

**PARENTS WHO REPEATEDLY REFUSE TO LET MINORS CONSUME ALCOHOL  
WILL SEND A CLEAR, CONSISTENT MESSAGE THAT  
DECREASES THE CHANCE YOUTH WILL DRINK ALCOHOL.**



### **What Can You Do As A Parent/Caregiver?**

- Talk with your child regularly about the many risks (health, legal, etc.) of underage drinking.
- Enforce clear rules, boundaries, and consequences for drinking. Share your rules with other adults who take responsibility for your child.
- Do not provide alcohol to any underage youth in your home or in your care.
- Carefully monitor all parties and get-togethers.
- Know where your child will be and develop a code word/ways for them to contact you for a ride home if they are ever placed in an uncomfortable situation.
- Be a responsible example for your child, especially in their presence. If you choose to drink, do so in moderation and avoid daily drinking. Do not drive while intoxicated.



## **RESOURCES**

### **Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**

<https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/prevention.htm>

### **Partnership to End Addiction**

<https://drugfree.org/article/social-host-law/>

### **Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking (ICCPUD)**

[stopalcoholabuse.gov](http://stopalcoholabuse.gov)

### **Prevention First**

<https://www.prevention.org/alcohol-policy-resource-center/fact-sheets/social-host/>

<https://www.prevention.org/alcohol-policy-resource-center/fact-sheets/social-host-ordinances>

