

Facts About Underage Drinking at House Parties

- An underage drinking “house party” is a gathering of two or more people in a home or on private property (field, backyard) where youth under 21 years of age possess and consume alcohol.
- 61% of Connecticut youth report in surveys they drink at “house parties.”
- 77% of high school students report obtaining alcohol at home, with or without parental permission.
- Binge drinking occurs because alcohol is freely available.
- Common serious results are: alcohol poisoning, traffic crashes, property damage, community disturbance, violence, and sexual assault.

Facts About Underage Drinking in Connecticut

- Underage drinking in Connecticut is 28% higher than the national average.
- In Connecticut, if a child begins drinking alcohol before the age of 15 they are 5 times more likely to develop alcohol problems than those who start after 21—the legal age.
- Connecticut ranks 15th highest in the nation for the rate of underage binge drinking (consuming 5 or more drinks at one occasion).

What about your Constitutional Rights?

This law does not grant police any more power: probable cause is still required before police come to your premises (for example, a noise complaint).

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Connecticut's New Underage Drinking Law

FACTS You Should Know



Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse

Under a grant from:

**The Brooklyn Cares Program of
Brooklyn Correctional Institution**

The Brooklyn Cares Program is a non-profit snack bar program. All profits generated are donated to charitable causes in the community.

The Law and Underage Possession of Alcohol

It is now illegal for anyone under 21 to possess alcohol anywhere (public or private property).

The penalty for a minor possessing alcohol ANYWHERE:

First offense: An infraction resulting in a fine ranging between \$74—\$136

Subsequent offenses: A fine ranging between \$200—\$500

What if I give alcohol to my own child?

Law permits parents, legal guardians, or spouses over the age of 21 to provide alcohol to their own child, this law will not change that. There is also an exemption for anyone observing religious services. This does not change with the new law.

Connecticut's Underage Drinking law

On October 1, 2006, a new Connecticut Law was implemented dealing with underage possession of alcohol and also penalizing those individuals who provide alcohol to minors in “house party” situations. This brochure will provide some of the facts about underage drinking in Connecticut and the new law.



The information in this brochure was primarily provided by the Connecticut Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking.

The Law and “social hosting of House parties”

It is now illegal to host (or to be aware that your home will be used to host) a party where alcohol is provided to minors (under 21).

The penalty for hosting a party, or allowing minors to consume alcohol is:

First offense: An infraction resulting in a fine ranging between \$74—\$136.

Subsequent offenses: misdemeanor (a fine no more than \$500, or imprisoned no more than 1 year, or both).

If I go away on vacation, and my child hosts an underage drinking party, am I responsible?

Under the proposed law, adults are not responsible for hosting the party if they are away from home and youth hold a drinking party without their knowledge. A teen or other person in control of the house could be cited for hosting the party in addition to possessing alcohol. Under other state statutes and case law, the owner of a home may be liable for injuries or other consequences that occur regardless of whether or not the homeowner is present. The new law doesn't change civil liability.