When Your Teen is Giving a Party...

1. Plan in advance. Discuss the party plans with your teenager. Know the guest list, so you can prevent an "open party" situation.
2. Set definite starting and ending times. Plan an activity such as swimming, skating or renting movies. Consider a daytime party.
3. Agree to rules ahead of time:
   - No alcohol or other drugs.
   - No smoking.
   - No leaving, then returning to the party.
   - No gate crashers allowed.
   - Lights will be left on.
   - Some rooms are off limits.
4. Know your responsibilities! Be visible and aware. You are legally responsible for anything that may happen to a minor who has been served drugs or alcohol in your home.
5. Invite another parent or couple as company for you during a long evening, and to help if there are any problems. When parents deliver their teens to your house, invite them in to get acquainted, if only briefly.

When Your Teen is Going to a Party...

1. Make sure there will be parental supervision and that no alcohol will be served. A tactful call to the host may be advisable.
2. Know where your daughter/son is going and with whom. When taking your teen to a party, go to the door and introduce yourself. If you already know the family, at least wait until your child is inside the house.
3. Make it easy for your teen to leave a party. Agree that they can call you (or another adult) to come for them if there is any reason why staying is uncomfortable.
4. Urge your teen NEVER to ride home with a driver who has been drinking.
5. Be awake to greet your teen when they come home.

What Does the 21 Legal Purchase Age Law Mean?

It means you must be 21 years old to buy alcoholic beverages in bars, taverns, restaurants, and clubs or to buy those beverages in liquor stores and supermarkets. It is also illegal for any person, over or under 21, to buy alcoholic beverages for, or give them to, anyone under 21 (except their own child).

What Will Happen to an Underage Person Who gets Caught Drinking, Purchasing, or Possessing Alcohol?

Any person who presents false identification to purchase alcoholic beverages can receive a fine of up to $100 and/or an appropriate amount of community service not to exceed 30 hours. In addition, there can be a 90-day suspension of the driver's license of anyone who has used it to illegally purchase or attempt to purchase alcoholic beverages. All driver licenses and non-driver identification cards for persons under 21 are imprinted with the statement "under 21 years of age." Also, another law makes it illegal for those under 21 to possess alcohol with an intent to consume it and empowers both police and peace officers to confiscate the alcohol.

May a Parent Serve Alcohol to Teens and their Friends at a Parent Supervised Party?

No, the law applies to all situations in which an underage person is served alcohol by anyone but her/his parents. A parent serving the young friends alcohol would be committing a Class A Misdemeanor under Penal Law Section 260.20, which allows a parent or guardian to furnish liquor or beer to their own child only. The Social Host Law also applies, exposing the parent to civil liability for any injury caused by the minor as a result of intoxication.

What is the Social Host Law?

Under General Obligation Law Section 11-100, any person who is injured by a minor who is intoxicated, or whose ability is impaired, may sue for the resulting damage whoever knowingly provided the alcohol to the minor. Also each county may have their own "Social Host" Law with additional penalties.

May Children Drink at Home With Their Parents, or be Served Wine as part of a Religious Service?

Yes. A parent or guardian may serve alcohol to his or her own child under 21 only at home or as part of a religious service. The Social Host Law applies here also.

Can a Parent or Legal Guardian Buy His or Her Underage Child an Alcoholic Beverage in a Licensed Establishment, Ball Park or Private club?

No, since that would amount to the parent misrepresenting the age of the child. The law applies to all licensed facilities.

May 19 and 20 Year Olds Enter Bars?

Yes, though some bars may protect themselves by prohibiting underage persons from their premises. A bartender who serves alcohol to someone under 21 could suffer criminal penalties plus civil liability if the person becomes intoxicated and causes injuries or damage. The bar could lose its license if alcohol is served to underage patrons.

May Underage Persons Work in Bars?

Yes, a person 18 years of age or older may serve as a bartender, waiter, waitress, hostess or bus person, under the supervision of someone 21 or older.

What are the Benefits of the 21 Purchase Age?

The benefits of the 21 purchase age are a 25-30% decrease in alcohol-related crashes involving 19 and 20 year olds, who are responsible for over 100 deaths and 3,500 injuries each year, and an expected saving of $40 million in societal costs annually.

If you have information about a teen alcohol party, an adult (parent) who serves alcohol to minors or information about stores or bars that regularly sell to minors, please call 911

A Message From County Executive Steve Levy

Amazing as it may seem, we still have to remind people from time to time about the dangers of drunk driving and its tragic consequences.

Nationwide, in just the past decade, nearly a quarter of a million people have had their lives cut short simply because someone attempted to drive drunk. It is an appalling statistic that causes family heartbreak from Suffolk County to San Francisco and nearly everywhere in between.

But in Suffolk, we are working hard to eliminate this plague of our roadways by treating it as the violent crime it is. Our police force has made tens of thousands of DWI arrests in just the past six years, and we have convicted more drunk drivers than ever before. By doing so, and by using better equipment and better methods of detection, we have cut the number of alcohol-related fatalities in half. And we are going to keep working to bring that number down.

If you care about eliminating drunk driving, you can do your part by reading this brochure and sharing it with those you care about. If you have any questions or require further information please call (631) 853-5715.

Sincerely,

Steve Levy

Steve Levy
County Executive

STOP DWI New York

SUFFOLK COUNTY

Teens and Alcohol

What Parents Need to Know!

.08
Don't blow it.

New York State
STOP-DWI Foundation