

Ohio Investigative Unit



MEDIA RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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OIU Agents Remind Parents and Graduates of Ohio's Alcohol Laws

(Columbus) – In high schools all across Ohio, graduates and their families are celebrating the ending of one chapter and the beginning of another. Those celebrations often include alcohol.

In an effort to make this a safe graduation season, agents with the Ohio State Highway Patrol's Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) remind parents and graduates to make the decision not to participate in illegal and dangerous behavior, such as providing alcohol to minors and consuming underage.

“As a party host you think you are prepared for every scenario,” said Captain Gary Allen, commander of OIU. “However, you cannot predict the unexpected. You may have taken away all the keys, but one person still drives off. You may have locked all the bedroom doors, but one person was still sexually assaulted in the bathroom. You may have provided food and water for your guests, but someone still gets alcohol poisoning.”

To help foster good choices, parents and teens need to understand Ohio's underage drinking laws.

- It is illegal to provide a place for your child and his/her friends to drink in a “safe” environment. In fact, parents may not provide alcohol to children who are under 21, who are not their own, even in their own home with the other parents' permission. Those convicted of providing alcohol to a person under 21 years of age face maximum sentences of six months in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine.
- It is illegal to purchase alcohol for anyone under 21. Anyone who purchases, sells or gives alcoholic beverages to underage individuals faces a \$1,000 fine and/or up to six months in jail.
- If you are under 21 and are caught driving with a blood alcohol concentration of .02 percent or higher, a level that can be reached after just one or two drinks, you can be arrested. Punishment is suspension of your driver license for at least 90 days up to a maximum of two years, plus four points added to your driving record. Having an open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle is also illegal.

Also, carry outs and drive-through establishments should be on alert for underage individuals attempting to purchase alcohol. Agents remind liquor permit staff to ensure they are making a good faith effort to verify the purchaser's age. Agents also recommend limo companies review policies with their drivers and ensure they know they may also be charged with permitting underage consumption.

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Commit to making this a safe graduation season, by not participating in underage drinking. If you have information about a bar; store or carryout selling beer and/or liquor to persons under the age of 21; or you have information of an underage house party, please notify the Ohio Investigative Unit by calling the #677 on your cell phone and your complaint will be investigated.

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The Ohio State Highway Patrol's Ohio Investigative Unit agents are plain-clothed fully sworn peace officers. OIU is charged with enforcing the state's liquor laws and is the only state law enforcement agency specifically tasked with investigating food stamp fraud crimes. Agents also investigate tobacco violations. Follow OIU on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ohio-Investigative-Unit/165782203506269> and on Twitter by logging onto http://twitter.com/Ohio_OIU.