

Description of strategy

A “Cops in Shops” program places undercover law enforcement officers, or alcohol beverage control (ABC) agents or inspectors in off-premise stores that sell alcohol. Officers issue citations or make arrests for underage purchase, attempts to purchase, and related violations, including citations for adults who purchase alcohol for underage youth, according to the current law of the jurisdiction where the program is in operation. Training is provided to both law enforcement officials and retailers.

In this program, law enforcement officers and inspectors not only cite or arrest underage youth who attempt to purchase or purchase alcohol illegally, the program also emphasizes the use of publicity as a continuous deterrent to potential underage buyers. Store posters, stickers for cold case storage areas, brochures, posters on buses or in subways, buttons, and television public service announcements remind young people that if they attempt to buy alcohol illegally, they may be dealing with an undercover law enforcement officer or alcohol inspector. “Cops in Shops” was originally developed in Delaware, but in recent years the program has been enhanced, packaged, and promoted nationwide by the Century Council, a national, not-for-profit organization dedicated to fighting drunk driving and illegal underage drinking (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2001).

Discussion of effectiveness

Alcohol

No evidence regarding the effectiveness of "Cops in Shops" programs was located.

Intervening Variables	
Retail Pricing	
Retail availability	
Social availability	
Law Enforcement	
Community norms	
Promotion & media	

References for description of strategy

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2001). Community How To Guides On Underage Drinking: Enforcement. Retrieved July 23, 2012, from: http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/alcohol/community%20guides%20html/Book5_Enforcement.html#Shoulder%20tap

Further reading

Cops in Shops (web page). (n.d.). Available at: <http://www.centurycouncil.org/initiative/cops-shops>.

Montgomery, J. M., Foley, K. L., & Wolfson, M. (2006). Enforcing the minimum drinking age: State, local and agency characteristics associated with compliance checks and Cops in Shops programs. *Addiction*, 101(2), 223-231. doi:10.1111/j.1360-0443.2006.01328.x.

National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives. (2001). Community how to guides on underage drinking prevention: Guide 5, Enforcement. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Available at: http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/alcohol/community%20guides%20html/Book5_Enforcement.html#shoulder%20tap