

Police Conduct 'Decoy Shoulder Tap' Operation To Deter Sale Of Alcohol To Minors

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(FOX 11) With Saint Patrick's Day just around the corner, law enforcement is being proactive. They've conducted a statewide operation aimed at preventing the sale of alcohol to minors. It's called the "Decoy Shoulder Tap" program.

The California Alcoholic Beverage Control and nearly 100 law enforcement agencies used this undercover operation to reduce youth access to alcohol and send a clear message that it is illegal for adults to purchase or provide alcohol to persons under the age of 21.

Underage drinking risks include:

Death - 5,000 people under age 21 die each year from alcohol-related car crashes, homicides, suicides, alcohol poisoning, and other injuries such as falls, burns, and drowning.

Serious injuries - More than 190,000 people under age 21 visited an emergency room for alcohol-related injuries in 2008 alone.

Impaired judgment - Drinking can cause kids to make poor decisions, which can then result in risky behavior like drinking and driving, sexual activity, or violence.

Increased risk for physical and sexual assault - Youth who drink are more likely to carry out or be the victim of a physical or sexual assault.

Brain development problems - Research shows that brain development continues well into a person's twenties. Alcohol can affect this development, and contribute to a range of problems.

Here's how you can recognize the signs of underage drinking:



Anyone who interacts with young people should pay close attention to the warning signs that may indicate underage drinking. Some of these warning signs include:

- Academic and/or behavioral problems in school
- Changing groups of friends
- Less interest in activities and/or appearance
- Finding alcohol among a young person's things or smelling alcohol on their breath
- Slurred speech
- Coordination problems
- Memory and/or concentration problems

Fortunately most Californians say no when a minor asks them to buy alcohol. On average 9 out of 10 individuals who are approached by decoys working with law enforcement do not buy alcohol for the youth.

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