

Teens Less Likely to Drink if Their Communities Have Strong Social Hosting Laws

/By [JOIN TOGETHER STAFF](#)

OCTOBER 28TH, 2014

A new study finds teenagers are less likely to drink at parties if their community has strong social hosting laws. These laws hold adults responsible if teens drink on their property, even if the adults claim they were unaware that underage drinking was taking place.

The researchers looked at 50 communities in California, half of which had social hosting laws, [Business Standard](#) reports. Teens were less likely to say they drank at parties if they lived in communities with especially strong social hosting laws.

“It does look like there is less-frequent drinking among teenagers in cities with stringent social host laws, even when other city and youth characteristics that are related to underage drinking are controlled for,” lead researcher Mallie Paschall of the Prevention Research Center in Oakland, California said in a [news release](#). “So these laws might be an effective strategy for reducing hazardous drinking.” He noted, “Most kids get alcohol from social sources, not commercial ones.”

The findings are published in the [Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs](#).

Strong social hosting laws specifically target underage drinking. They include a civil penalty, such as a large fine, that is quickly administered, Paschall said. Strong social hosting laws also hold property owners responsible, even if they say they didn’t know underage drinking occurred. He said police in some communities don’t enforce these laws, possibly because of a lack of support from the public or the local prosecutor’s office.

The researchers plan to study rates of teen drinking before and after social hosting laws are passed, to better measure their impact. They also want to assess the laws’ effect on problems related to teen drinking, such as drunk driving.