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What Parents Need to Know About Underage Drinking Prevention

The legal drinking age is 21 and there is a Social Host Law in Oklahoma. Parents should remember to keep an eye on how accessible alcohol is to minors. Oklahoma's social host law means it's up to you to make sure kids don't drink in your home or on your property. The law is clear: if kids under age 21 are drinking alcohol at a gathering, and you are providing the location for that gathering, you are responsible- whether you're an adult or a minor, and whether you rent, own, or simply provide the location. Fines for the first offense are up to \$500.

Oklahoma's Social Host Law:

Property Owners Are Accountable. If people under 21 are gathered and drinking on private property, the person who provides the location is considered the Social Host, and will be held accountable.

Accountability Goes Beyond The Party. A "Social Host" can be a minor or adult and does not have to be physically present or the actual property owner.

Fines are Immediate. Social Host violations carry a first-time fine of up to \$500.

Adults & Minors Are Accountable. If someone is injured or killed because of a Social host violation, you can be charged with a felony, punishable by up to 5 years in prison and a fine up to \$2,500.

Repeat Offenders Can Go To Prison. Fines increase with additional violations- three strikes gets you a felony conviction with up to 5 years in prison and a fine up to 5 years in prison and a fine up to \$2,500.



***Don't give people under 21
a place to drink.***

We've heard it all; my child is safe if they're consuming alcohol with me around or at my house; my child is a great kid and wouldn't do anything like that; their parents are okay with it; we did this when we were their age and turned out fine; I'd rather them drink here than somewhere else, the list goes on. 1 in 5 Oklahoma youth reported having had 5 or more drinks in a row in the last 30 days (ODMHSAS). The Red Rock Regional Prevention Coordinator (RPC) encourages you to respect that the law is only in place for youth and community safety. Just say NO to be a social host.

The effects that alcohol can have on an adolescent brain are detrimental and long lasting. Beer is no longer considered low point and mixed drinks have been targeted towards the taste buds of youth. Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience:

- School problems, such as higher absence and poor failing grades
- Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities
- Alcohol-related car crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls, and drowning
- Death from alcohol poisoning

Lynsi Mayfield, the RPC Director with Red Rock states, "It's always better to be safe than sorry. Many times one can never predict how and at what point alcohol will begin to affect a youth's body, life, brain, and personality."

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