

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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ABC CITES EIGHT MINORS FOR USING FALSE IDENTIFICATION***CLERKS ALSO CITED FOR SELLING ALCOHOL TO MINORS***

(Santa Barbara) – Santa Barbara Police Officers, working with Investigators of the California Department Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) arrested eight under-age drinkers at a local restaurant. The case was notable because all eight minors were using counterfeit identification. Police also cited four persons for selling alcohol to minors. The action was the result of a compliance check operation in which minors under the direct supervision of the investigators, attempted to purchase alcohol from retail licensees in the City of Santa Barbara. Violations occurred at four different locations.

Those who sold to the minor face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC will take administrative action against the business's liquor license. That may include a fine, a suspension of the liquor license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

The Decoy Operation marked the beginning of a two day enforcement operation in the City of Santa Barbara. In addition to the minors cited for using false ID's and the clerks who sold to minors, SBPD Officers working with ABC Investigators arrested eleven other suspects on a variety of alcohol related violations.

ABC and Santa Barbara Police Department will be conducting the compliance checks city-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Young people under the age of 21 have a higher rate of drunk driving fatalities than the general adult population.

Under the Minor Decoy operation, the minor must be under the age of 20, must have the appearance of a minor, cannot wear clothes or jewelry that would make them look older, and must answer truthfully if asked their age. Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10 percent or even below. The latest violation rate state-wide is almost 24 percent, or nearly one in five retail licensees selling to minors.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Sunne Wright McPeak, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.