

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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December 20, 2004
PR #04-87

ABC CITES FOUR STORES FOR FURNISHING ALCOHOL TO MINORS

SAN DIEGO COUNTY- Investigators from the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) cited four stores December 4, 2004 in San Diego County for furnishing alcoholic beverages to minors. Investigators also cited a female juvenile for trying to steal two bottles of Vodka.

The actions were the result of a compliance check operation in which minors under the direct supervision of ABC investigators, attempted to purchase alcohol from retail licensees in the communities of Lakeside and Alpine.

Minor decoys attempted to purchase alcohol at 17 different locations and were able to make purchases at four of them. 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.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-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.

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.