

**DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL**

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## **ABC Visits 26 Citrus Heights Locations in Minor Decoy Operation** *Not One Store Sells to a Minor*

**(Citrus Heights)** Investigators of the California Department Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) conducted a compliance check operation January 16, 2007 in which minors under the direct supervision of the investigators, attempted to purchase alcohol from 26 retail licensees in the City of Citrus Heights and not one store sold to a minor.

Those who sell to a minor can face a maximum 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 drunken 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 approximately 20 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.