

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

3927 Lennane Drive, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95834
(916) 419-2500



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: John Carr (916) 419-2525

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ABC Cites Clerks Who Sold Alcohol to Minors

(Santa Cruz) – Investigators of the California Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) in cooperation with the Santa Cruz Police Department and University of California, Santa Cruz Police Department cited three people for selling alcohol to a minor during a minor Decoy Operation on November 27, 2007. The actions were the result of a compliance check operation in which minors under the direct supervision of the investigators, attempted to purchase alcohol from 11 retail licensees in the city of Santa Cruz.

Those who sold to the minor 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 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 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 alcoholic beverage 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, which is under the direction of Secretary Dale E. Bonner, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.