

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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ABC Investigators Visit 12 Los Gatos Locations in Minor Decoy Operation *Three Clerks Sell to Minors during ABC & Friday Night Live Partnership Operation*

(Los Gatos)- Investigators of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) along with decoys from the Friday Night Live Partnership conducted a compliance check operation March 22, 2007, in which minors under the direct supervision of investigators, attempted to purchase alcohol from 12 retail licensees in the City of Los Gatos. Three locations sold alcohol to a minor.

Those who sell to a 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 alcoholic beverage licenses of the businesses where the sales occurred. That may include a fine, a suspension of the license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Statistics have shown that 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.

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

Funding for this operation was provided by the Friday Night Live Partnership 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 Dale E. Bonner, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.