

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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ABC Cites Five Clerks for Selling Alcohol to Minors *Decoy Operation Included Visits to 29 Stores in South Monterey County*

(Monterey County) - Investigators of the California Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) have cited five individuals for selling alcohol to minors during a March 20, 2010, enforcement operation. The actions were the result of a compliance check operation in which minors under the direct supervision of Investigators, attempted to purchase alcohol from 29 retail licensees in the cities of Gonzales, King City, and Soledad.

The clerks who sold 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 alcohol was sold to a minor. The penalty may include a fine, a suspension of the liquor license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

ABC worked closely with Sun Street Centers' Safe Teens Empowerment Project in Salinas (S.T.E.P.S.), a non-profit youth organization that promotes a drug and alcohol free life for area youth.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks statewide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's.

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 the operation was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Agency Secretary Dale E. Bonner, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.