

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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ABC Visits 14 Licensed Premises and All Refuse to Sell to Minors

(Long Beach-Torrance-Carson) - Investigators of the California Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) visited 14 businesses that are licensed to sell alcohol during a minor decoy operation on Thursday, February 21, 2008. Not one business that was visited sold alcohol to a minor.

The operation involved minors under the direct supervision of ABC Investigators who attempted to purchase alcohol from 14 retail licensees in the cities of Long Beach, Torrance and Carson.

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.

Persons 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 license of the business. That may include a fine, a suspension of the license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

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 program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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.