

# **SECTION III**

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## **Overview of Strategies to Reduce Underage Alcohol Use**

***Strategies to Reduce Underage Alcohol Use***  
**Effectiveness and Priority Level as Established**  
**by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice**  
**and Delinquency Prevention**

Enforcement of minimum purchase age laws aimed at retailers

| <b>Strategy</b>  | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Level of Effectiveness</b>  |
|--|-----------------|--|
| Vigorous use of compliance checks                                | Very High       | Repeatedly demonstrated to reduce sales of alcohol to minors   |
| Application of appropriate sanctions to violating merchants      | High            | Has not been specifically evaluated but is an important adjunct to compliance checks   |
| Education of merchants regarding techniques and responsibilities | High            | Sometimes found to have some effect alone, but most important as an adjunct to compliance checks   |
| Development of community support for enforcement                 | High            | Not specifically evaluated but can be an important strategy for supporting and sustaining the use of compliance checks                     |
| Dram shop liability for sales to minors                          | Medium          | Not specifically evaluated in reducing sales to minors. Similar laws have been found to be effective in reducing impaired driving crashes. |

Enforcement aimed at youth

| Strategy   | Priority | Level of Effectiveness   |
|--|----------|--|
| “Use/lose” laws and other penalties applied to violating youth   | Medium   | Not specifically evaluated but important as part of a general community expression that youth should not use alcohol   |
| Special police “party patrols” to contain underage parties and ticket both minors and any adults who provide alcohol | Medium   | Not specifically evaluated but consistent with the general finding that well-publicized enforcement reduces violations |
| Penalties applied to the use of false identification   | Medium   | Not specifically evaluated but may be a way of reducing access   |
| “Cops in Shops” and similar programs that allow police to ticket minors attempting to purchase alcohol               | Medium   | Not specifically evaluated but can be part of a general community expression that sales to minors are not acceptable   |

Strategies aimed at reducing social availability of alcohol

| Strategy  | Priority | Level of Effectiveness  |
|---|----------|---|
| Keg registration laws                                 | Medium   | Not specifically evaluated but are consistent with the general finding that reducing access reduces use |
| Enforcement of laws against buying alcohol for minors | Medium   | Not specifically evaluated but may be a way of reducing access  |
| Sales displays that discourage shoplifting            | Medium   | Not specifically evaluated but may be a way of reducing access  |

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| Special enforcement campaigns to prevent parties where alcohol is served to minors | Medium | Not specifically evaluated but may be a way of reducing access |
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Improvement of laws related to minimum purchase age

| <b>Strategy</b>   | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Level of Effectiveness</b>   |
|---|-----------------|---|
| Improve laws regarding minors in possession of alcohol                                    | High            | States with more stringent laws have been found to have lower rates of sales to minors.   |
| Require sellers of alcohol to be at least 21 years old                                    | Medium          | Not specifically evaluated, but may be a way of reducing access   |
| Make the manufacture or purchase of false identification a crime                          | Medium          | Not specifically evaluated, but may be a way of reducing access   |
| Make the provision of alcohol to minors an offense  | Medium          | Not specifically evaluated, but may be a way of reducing access. Also, it expresses community norms against underage drinking more clearly. |
| Make outlets liable for the harm that occurs as the result of providing alcohol to minors | Medium          | Not specifically evaluated in reducing sales to minors. Similar laws have been found to be effective in reducing impaired-drinking crashes. |

### Controls on availability

| <b>Strategy</b>                             | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Level of Effectiveness</b>   |
|---|-----------------|---|
| Increase in price through excise taxes      | Very High       | Increased taxes have consistently been found to reduce alcohol consumption and problems, especially among youth.                        |
| Conditional-use permits for alcohol outlets | High            | Not specifically evaluated, but may be a way of reducing access   |
| Controls on outlet location and density     | High            | Higher density contributes to increased alcohol-related problems. Lower density reduces alcohol-related problems.                       |
| Controls on hours of sales                  | High            | Effects on young people have not been specifically evaluated, but in general, controls on availability reduce alcohol-related problems. |

### Expressions of community norms against underage use

| <b>Strategy</b>  | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Level of Effectiveness</b>   |
|--|-----------------|---|
| Prohibitions or controls on alcohol use at community events or in public areas (e.g., fairs, festivals, parks) | High            | Not specifically evaluated, but can be a strong expression of community norms and can reduce alcohol access |
| Prohibition of alcohol sponsorship of public events (e.g., sponsoring a boat race)                             | High            | Not specifically evaluated, but can be a strong expression of community norms                               |

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| Media campaigns, media advocacy and counter-advertising  | High   | Media campaigns have been found to be very important components of enforcement efforts, greatly magnifying their effectiveness. Counter-advertising has been found to be effective in reducing use of tobacco. Similar campaigns may be effective for alcohol. |
| Controls on alcohol advertising (especially on billboards, sides of buses and in other public areas) | Medium | Exposure to alcohol advertising has been found to have an effect on attitudes toward alcohol and intentions to use.  |
| Community sponsorship of alcohol-free activities for young people                                    | Medium | Not specifically evaluated, but can help to establish community norms against underage use   |
| Parent coalitions to reduce alcohol use by their children  | Medium | Not specifically evaluated, but can be an expression of community norms  |

### Strategies based in schools and in other youth organizations

| <b>Strategy</b>   | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Level of Effectiveness</b>                                      |
|---|-----------------|--|
| School policies regarding alcohol use on school property or at school-sponsored events (These policies are especially important in high schools, but are even more important in colleges and universities.) | High            | This strategy has been found to reduce substance use and problems. |

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| Media literacy programs* to make youth more sophisticated about the manipulative techniques of advertisers                     | Medium | Some effects on attitudes have been found.   |
| Prevention curricula* (Sometimes the content of these or similar curricula are delivered in other venues [e.g., youth clubs].) | Low    | In general, research and evaluations have found that these programs have weak and inconsistent effects on alcohol use. |

\* Not usually considered an environmental strategy

### Prevention of impaired driving

| <b>Strategy</b>   | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Level of Effectiveness</b>  |
|---|-----------------|--|
| Establishment and enforcement of “zero-tolerance” laws for drivers under 21   | Very High       | All states now have these laws. Very effective in reducing alcohol-related traffic crashes, especially if well publicized and enforced |
| Sobriety checkpoints for impaired drivers (especially important as a method of enforcing zero-tolerance laws)   | Very High       | Very effective in reducing impaired driving and crashes. Specific effects on young people have not been thoroughly evaluated.          |
| Vigorous and well-publicized enforcement of impaired-driving laws in general, as well as other traffic enforcement (e.g., speeding, running red lights) | High            | Strong effect on impaired driving. Specific effects on young people have not been thoroughly evaluated.                                |

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| Responsible beverage service techniques that can reduce sales to minors as well as reduce sales of alcohol to intoxicated persons | Medium | Some studies have shown improvements in ID checking as a result of training. Stronger effects have been shown in reducing service to intoxicated patrons, especially when combined with enforcement. |
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**Source**

*Strategies to Reduce Underage Alcohol Use: Typology and Brief Overview*, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, 1999.