

Hosting a Teenager Party

A Warning for Parents and Guardians about Alcohol

When parties get out of hand, including violence, sexual assault, accidental injury, property damage, alcohol poisoning or mixed substance overdose, the common factor is almost always alcohol.

As a parent or guardian about to host a teen party it is important that you are aware of some issues:

1

You may be under pressure to either supply alcohol or turn a blind eye to alcohol consumption. You might be hearing from your children and even some parents that everyone does it. The truth is that the majority of parents don't want their children getting alcohol and **most teenager parties are either totally alcohol free or have substantial rules to limit the access of alcohol to minors.**

2

It is illegal for any person other than a minor's parent or guardian, or a person authorised by the parent or guardian, to supply alcohol to that minor. If you do allow alcohol at the party don't assume you have the permission of other parents to allow their children to drink it. When things go wrong you'll be held responsible. A \$1,100 on-the-spot fine can be issued or the courts can impose penalties of up to \$11,000 and/or 12 months imprisonment.

3

If under 18 drinking does occur at your party, even if you are only supplying your own child and other party goers bring their own, or even if you have gained explicit permission to supply other people's children, the supply must be consistent with responsible supervision of a minor. **You'll still be held responsible if the teens aren't properly supervised and things go wrong.** Amongst other things responsible supervision means ensuring no one is drinking to intoxication.

4

Please don't think that it's unlikely that anyone gets caught for these offenses. Underage drinkers are at a far greater risk than older drinkers of being involved in alcohol related incidents. They regularly attract the attention of police, ambulance and hospital staff.

In terms of hospital presentations for alcohol related injury, this age group (15 to 17 year olds) is higher than all other age groups except 18 to 24 year olds.

5

Allowing underage people to drink at a party is not teaching them to drink responsibly. You might be thinking you're doing the right thing by allowing drinking in a supervised environment, but it just encourages drinking. The latest research demonstrates that **adults who supply underage teens with alcohol, even with the best intentions and under supervision, accelerate the young people into regular drinking and lay down the groundwork for alcohol related harm.**

The law is on your side to just say no to alcohol and minors.

Save yourself the heartache and do the responsible thing for young people and other parents.