



Traffic Safety News

From the Delaware Office of Highway Safety

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Beginning a meaningful discussion about the subject of underage drinking with a group of adults seems like a daunting task. Do I focus on young men and women already in the workforce - or - do I talk about school age teens and the upcoming prom and graduation season? Do I begin talking about when adolescents are most likely to begin drinking alcohol on a regular basis - or - do I simply focus on the number of teens killed in alcohol-related crashes? It seems a little overwhelming.

What you need to know

If talking about underage drinking is challenging for me, I can only imagine how difficult it must be for you as parents. How exactly do you talk to your under- 21 family members, friends, or co-workers about a subject as complex as alcohol? **Let's start with the facts:**

- ✓ In 2010, the University of Delaware conducted a survey of alcohol use in Delaware student. The results reveal that 2% of 5th graders, 19% of 8th graders, and 37% of 11th graders reported using alcohol in the last month.
- ✓ Nationally, approximately 5,000 minors die as a result of underage drinking every year. This includes motor vehicle crashes, homicides, suicides, and injuries such as falls, burns and drowning.
- ✓ In 2009, 4 teens were killed on Delaware roadways because of underage drinking and driving. Another 1,000 teens suffered injury.
- ✓ Experts say the majority of young people are getting alcohol from their parents or another adult, even though penalties for serving a minor include fines up to \$500 and 40 hours of community service.
- ✓ Giving alcohol to minors is not a rite of passage, it's illegal. You may think its safer to give your children alcohol in the home where you can keep an eye on them and their friends but studies show that young people who begin drinking as teens have a significant risk for becoming alcoholics later in life. Alcohol also impairs the growth of their still developing internal organs.

What you can do

Now that you know some of the facts, how exactly do you talk to a young person about alcohol? Experts say Early and Often. No matter how busy we are underage drinking should never take the back seat. **These free resources will keep you in the driver's seat:**

- ✓ **Know the facts about underage drinking in Delaware** (www.ohs.delaware.gov/underagedrinking)
- ✓ **Take advantage of free parenting programs**(www.udel.edu/usa)
- ✓ **Get advice and a free handbook from MADD** (<http://www.madd.org/underage-drinking/the-power-of-parents>)

Under 21? Think Don't Drink. Arrive Alive DE.

This message is being sent to you by the Office of Highway Safety, who asks you to drive safely at all times. For more information on this and other traffic safety programs, go to www.ohs.delaware.gov.