



Sutter County Sheriff's Office Press Release

For Immediate Release:

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Sutter County Sheriff's Office Runs Second Decoy Operation in Attempt to Reduce Underage Drinking

The Sutter County Sheriff's Office has cited one clerk for selling alcohol to minors. The actions were the result of a Minor Decoy Operation ran on February 7, 2018.

The Minor Decoy Operation involves minors who work under the direct supervision of deputies attempting to purchase alcohol from retail licensees in the County of Sutter.

Those who sell to the minor, face a minimum fine of \$250 and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, Alcoholic Beverage Control (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.

Consistently, throughout the Minor Decoy Operation, clerks requested valid identification from the decoy and upon learning their true age the purchase was denied. As a follow up to the "no sale", each business was provided a letter stating that a decoy had attempted to purchase alcohol, but was denied the purchase. The Sutter County Sheriff's Office thanks these businesses for their success and a job well done during the Minor Decoy Operation.

Sutter County Sheriff's Office is conducting the compliance checks 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.

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 to as low as 10 percent. 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.

In addition to the Minor Decoy Operation, the Sutter County Sheriff's Office conducted shoulder tap operations. Shoulder tap operations are when the decoy, under the age of 21, ask an adult to purchase them alcohol. The Sutter County Sheriff's Office cited three subjects for purchasing alcohol for the decoys.

This project is part of the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control's Education and Teen Alcohol Enforcement Program Grant, funded by the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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