

ASK YOURSELF:

*“When my teen has a party,
what are my responsibilities?”*

Your teen may soon be experiencing two of the most anticipated and rewarding events in his or her life: prom and graduation. As a parent, you have a responsibility to your teen during these high-risk events. It is important to plan ahead and then monitor what happens after the events.

Many of you are aware that underage drinking often occurs at and after prom, as well as after graduation. Most teens continue celebrating when the prom is over and graduation ends; they attend parties. You'd like your teen to have a good time and celebrate, but you also want him/her to be safe. The use of alcohol compromises your teen's safety and opens him/her and you to legal consequences.

Prom and graduation are supposed to be happy milestones in your teen's life. Step up with strong parental guidance to insure that post-event parties do not open the door to problems.

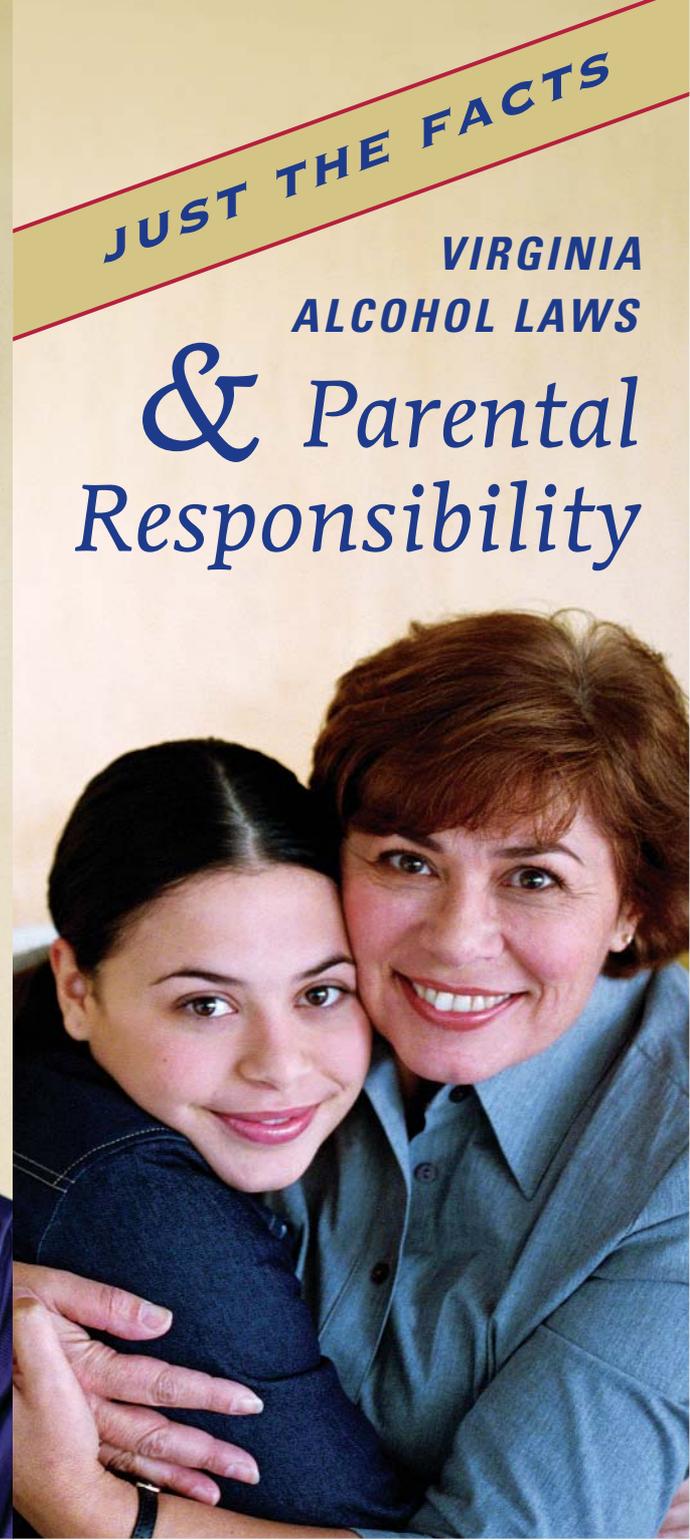
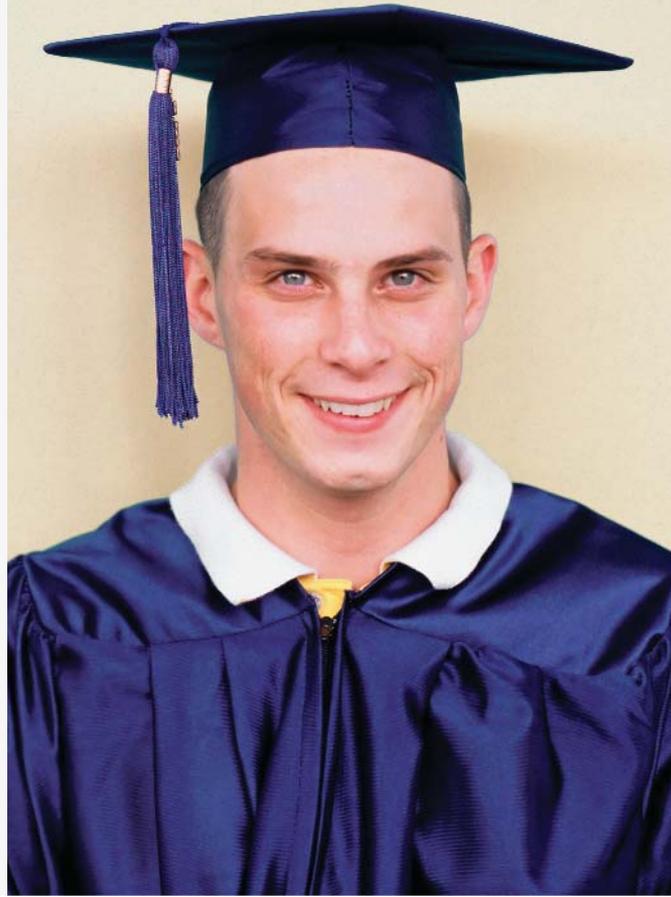


VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

This brochure was developed by the Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC).

If you have any questions about the information in this brochure, please contact Virginia ABC's Education Section at (804) 213-4688 or education@abc.virginia.gov.

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JUST THE FACTS

VIRGINIA ALCOHOL LAWS & Parental Responsibility

As a parent, you have a responsibility to your teen and to the laws of Virginia. Step up with strong parental guidance to insure that post-event parties do not open the door to problems. . . .



Parental Responsibility & the Law

Some parents provide alcohol to minors at parties or fail to see the truth that alcohol use occurs. If you're a parent who is thinking about providing or allowing alcohol at a party in your home (or elsewhere) you ought to know the laws. Parents may be held responsible if someone, as a result of alcohol use:

- Gets into a fight and hurts someone.
- Falls and hurts themselves or someone else.
- Sexually assaults someone.
- Damages property.
- Dies from drinking too much.
- Injures or kills someone while driving after leaving the party.

You have a civil liability (meaning you can be sued) to pay damages if either a partygoer is hurt or a third person is injured. Virginia law recognizes your liability for negligence if you provide alcohol to a minor who causes injury to another or him/herself. You may also face criminal charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Even if the above negative situations do not occur, you may face legal charges for providing or allowing alcohol to be used by minors in your home.

For example, it is against state law to allow (aid or abet) underage persons to possess or consume alcohol. This is a Class 1 misdemeanor and is punishable by up to one year in jail and/or a \$2,500 fine. Purchasing for and/or giving alcohol to a minor is also against the law, and penalties can include losing a driver's license for up to a year.

TIPS FOR HOSTING AN ALCOHOL-FREE PARTY

Discuss your expectations and rules with your teen and include him/her in the planning.

1. **No drugs or alcohol.**
2. **Lights must be left on.**
3. **Some rooms in the house are off limits.**
4. **Limit the number of people invited to an amount your home can comfortably accommodate (no open invitations).**
5. **Notify parents of guests about the starting and ending times and the party's location.**
6. **Avoid serving punch or serving soft drinks in cups, because they are easily tampered with. Serve soft drinks in cans or bottles.**
7. **Ask another parent to help chaperone, if needed.**
8. **When a guest leaves, do not allow him or her to return.**
9. **If you suspect that a guest has used alcohol or other drugs, contact his or her parents immediately.**
10. **Make your presence known. Try to avoid retiring to another part of the house. Walk through the party area frequently. Should someone come who is not invited, ask him or her to leave immediately. If you have a problem with uninvited guests, call the police, they will assist you.**

What Parents Can Do

- *Communicate clearly & openly.* Set a firm "no alcohol" rule and firm consequences for breaking that rule. Supply your teen with accurate information.
- *Support community & school-sponsored after-prom/graduation celebrations.* Most celebrations are parent sponsored and include community involvement. If your school does not sponsor such an event, please consider beginning a new tradition.
- *Host a party.* Provide a fun and alcohol-free environment in your own home by holding a party yourself.
- *Use a limousine.* The Virginia Limousine Association encourages its members to sign a pledge that they will not transport, supply or allow use of alcohol by minors in their vehicles.
- *Reflect on your own actions.* Look in the mirror. Are you sending the right signals to your teen? Strive to be a positive role model.

Laying Down the Law for Your Teen

- It is illegal for anyone under 21 to possess any alcoholic beverage.
- Virginia's Zero Tolerance law makes driving under the influence of any amount of alcohol a serious criminal offense for drivers under age 21.
- No one may use an altered or fake ID such as driver's license, birth certificate or student identification card to establish a false identity or false age to purchase an alcoholic beverage.
- Violators of the above are guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and, upon conviction, face a fine of up to \$2,500 and/or a year in jail and/or 50 hours of community service, and can lose their driver's license for up to a year.

For more information, please see "Fake IDs: The Truth about Using False Identification to Buy Alcohol" and "Parental Guide to Hosting Responsible Teen Parties," available online from Virginia ABC at www.abc.virginia.gov.