

Overview of Keg Registration

Keg registration laws (sometimes called keg tagging laws) require wholesalers or retailers to attach a tag, sticker, or engraving with an identification number to kegs exceeding a specified capacity (2-8 gallon minimum depending on the State). At the time of purchase, the retailer records identifying information about the purchaser (e.g., name, address, telephone number, driver's license). A refundable deposit may also be collected for the keg itself, the tapper mechanism used to serve the beer, or both. The deposit is refunded when the keg and/or tapper are returned with the identification number intact. In some states, keg laws specifically prohibit destroying or altering the ID tag and provide penalties for doing so. Other states make it a crime to possess an unregistered or unlabeled keg.

Some jurisdictions collect information that may aid law enforcement efforts, such as the location where the keg is to be consumed and the tag number of the vehicle in which the keg is transported. Some jurisdictions also require retailers to provide warning information at the time of purchase about laws prohibiting service to minors and/or other laws related to the purchase or possession of the keg.¹

Keg registration is not required by law in the State of Illinois. Throughout Illinois many communities and municipalities have passed local ordinances requiring keg registration to reduce underage drinking.

The Goal of Keg Registration

Keg registration is an alcohol policy implemented to reduce youth access to alcohol and the social availability of alcohol.

Strategies that limit access to alcohol by youth – or by the population in general – are some of the most powerful and well-documented approaches to reducing underage drinking and related problems.²

Communities have the opportunity to create their own alcohol landscape. Keg registration is a policy communities should consider in an effort to reduce youth access to alcohol.

Why Keg Registration is Important to Communities

Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States.³

Reducing underage access to alcohol not only will reduce injuries and other problems associated with drinking, but may have beneficial effects for these individuals during adulthood and reduce the long-run cost of alcohol to society.⁴

Among alcohol users in the past 30 days, 6% of 12th graders in Illinois reported consuming beer from a keg.⁵

Among alcohol users in the past year, 74% of 12th graders in Illinois obtained alcohol through at least one social source.⁵

Considerations for Planning and Implementing Keg Registration

Alcohol policies that reduce youth access to alcohol can reduce underage drinking in a community. As a community works to implement policies and strategies, it is important to focus on who will support the alcohol policy as well as who will be in opposition of the alcohol policy. Preparing a response to common concerns can allow for a thoughtful reply based on fact and not emotion. Two common concerns communities may encounter are:

Issue	Response
There may be strong opposition from beer wholesalers and retailers who may feel targeted by keg registration.	Keg registration does not penalize the beer industry or retailers. Rather, it is a policy to penalize adults who buy beer for underage youth. By supporting keg registration, the industry becomes part of the solution to the underage drinking problem. ⁶
There may be opposition from retailers who fear they will lose business if keg purchasers buy beer in neighboring communities that don't have keg registration policies.	Customers who do not intend to supply beer to underage persons are unlikely to avoid purchasing kegs at a store that has keg registration. ⁶

Helpful Tips and Suggestions

Keg registration works best if it covers a wider geographic area. A wider geographic area can prevent customers from traveling to neighboring communities to sidestep the policy.

Keg registration can reduce youth access, but is most effective when used as part of a community's comprehensive strategy to prevent underage drinking and alcohol-related problems within a community.

Resources and Tools

Alcohol Policy Information System (APIS) – <https://alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov/>

Illinois Youth Survey – <https://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/>

Illinois Liquor Control Commission – <https://www.illinois.gov/ilcc/Pages/Home.aspx>

Prevention First's Alcohol Policy Resource Center – <https://www.prevention.org/alcohol-policy-resource-center/>

References

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4. O'Malley, and Wagenaar, A.C.: The effects of minimum drinking age laws on alcohol use, related behaviors and traffic crash involvement among American youth 1976 – 1987. J. Stud Alcohol 52:478-491, 1991.
5. Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2019). Illinois Youth Survey 2018 Frequency Report. Champaign, IL: CPRD, School of Social Work, University of Illinois.
6. Alcohol Epidemiology Program at the University of Minnesota. Policies to Reduce Social Access to Alcohol. Web. August 2017.

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