



APRC 

ALCOHOL POLICY
RESOURCE CENTER

LAW ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIES GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

According to the Illinois Youth Survey, alcohol is the number-one substance used by teens in Illinois. Coalitions across the state focus on preventing and reducing youth alcohol use. The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) is a five-step process they employ to identify issues and how best to address them. The process entails assessment, capacity, planning, implementation and evaluation, with cultural competency and sustainability incorporated in each step. To learn more about the SPF process, download the Strategic Prevention Framework Resource Guide, <https://www.prevention.org/alcohol-policy-resource-center/tools-and-resources/>.

The SPF brings local people together to drive the process. Community-driven means a group of people (coalition) representing the community (all sectors) comes together to analyze local data, resulting in strategies and policies put into place locally. Partnership creation is a cornerstone of the SPF. Law Enforcement is a vital sector to engage for successful prevention. This guide will present evidence-based law enforcement strategies that coalitions can implement based on their local data.

Assesment Steps

The assessment step of the SPF allows coalitions to analyze their data and let it tell a story. Coalitions need to identify the factors that contribute to youth alcohol use in their community (contributing factor) by answering the following questions:

- What kind of access to alcohol (retail or social) does youth have in your community?
- Are the social norms in your community permissive about youth alcohol use?
- Do youth perceive risk in using alcohol?

Coalition and law enforcement collaboration is imperative in preventing youth alcohol use. Coalitions can assist with many tasks to ease the process. This guide will outline the strategies by contributing factor and how coalitions can help.

Retail Access

Retail Access is when youth purchase or take a product from a store, bar or restaurant. Compliance Checks and Cops in Shops are two evidence-based strategies coalitions can implement in partnership with law enforcement.

Compliance Checks

Law enforcement uses alcohol compliance checks to make alcohol less available to underage youth. Compliance checks can be done at bars, restaurants, liquor stores, grocery stores and convenience stores.



How They Work

Law enforcement agencies use underage buyers as volunteers to test retailers' compliance with laws regarding the sale of alcohol to minors.¹ Under the supervision of law enforcement, youth are sent into retail locations to determine if the employee will properly decline to sell to the underage buyer. If the employee fails the compliance check by selling or providing alcohol to the underage buyer, the law enforcement officer would intervene and take appropriate action to address the illegal sale.

Coalition Collaboration

Coalitions can help build support for this strategy by presenting retail access data to community partners and parents. They can provide access to youth volunteers. Coalitions can also facilitate funding for compliance checks. APRC law enforcement training can be requested and coordinated by local coalitions.



Cops In Shops

Cops in Shops is a trademarked term of the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility. This alcohol industry-funded organization lobbies at the national and local level for alcohol policies. Funding for the foundation is provided from various distillers, including Bacardi USA, Brown-Forman and Diageo, to name a few. The Cops in Shops program was established in 1992 to stop underage youth from purchasing or obtaining alcoholic beverages from off-premise retail liquor outlets such as convenience stores and liquor stores. In some communities, the program has been expanded to on-premise locations as well. Cops in Shops is a voluntary program between the retailer and local law enforcement.

How They Work

The program places undercover officers in retail establishments posing as clerks or store employees. Law enforcement works with the retail employee and assists with checking identification. When youth attempt to purchase alcoholic beverages using fraudulent identification, officers intervene and take enforcement action. Law enforcement also addresses issues with adults who legally purchase and then illegally provide alcohol to minors. Law enforcement may issue summonses or place violators under custodial arrest for attempts to illegally purchase, using fraudulent identification or unlawfully providing alcoholic beverages to underage youth.

Coalition Collaboration

Coalitions can help build support for this strategy by presenting retail access data to community partners and parents. They can provide access to youth volunteers.



Social Access

Social Access is when youth obtain alcohol at parties, from their parents (with or without permission), or from a friend/sibling. Shoulder Tap/Third-Party Transactions and Controlled Party Dispersal are the evidence-based strategies proven to reduce social access.

Shoulder Tap/Third-Party Transactions

Shoulder tap operations are a law enforcement strategy designed to hold adult providers of alcohol to youth accountable for their illegal behavior. Shoulder tap operations focus on the adult who is providing alcohol to underage youth.

How They Work

Underage volunteers are recruited, selected and trained to serve as decoys. The underage decoy, supervised by an officer, approaches an adult going into an establishment to buy alcohol and asks the adult to purchase alcohol for them. If the adult makes the purchase for the decoy, the adult provider is detained by the officers and dealt with appropriately. Shoulder tap operations can be implemented as either an active enforcement detail where arrests are made or summonses are issued or as an educational opportunity. For example, once the target has agreed to the purchase for the decoy, a coalition member or an officer could intervene and educate the target regarding the negative consequences of underage drinking and provide information about underage drinking in the community. Alternatively, the decision could also be made to allow the transaction to proceed and then arrest the target for the illegal supply of alcohol to minors.

Coalition Collaboration

Shoulder tap operations should be part of a community's overall comprehensive plan to reduce underage drinking and not its sole strategy. In addition, shoulder tap operations should not be undertaken without prior extensive training of officers and youth volunteers participating in the operation. Because of the sensitive nature and public perception of these operations, the coalition and law enforcement must engage in robust public education about underage drinking. These efforts should highlight the problems that can arise when adults illegally provide alcohol to underage youth.



Controlled Party Dispersal

Controlled Party Dispersal is a law enforcement strategy to address illegal underage drinking parties. Police officers in Montgomery County, Maryland developed the strategy in 1993 in response to the problems that were occurring at large underage drinking parties in their communities.²

How They Work

Controlled Party Dispersal focuses on containing party participants, identifying adult providers and controlling the release of party attendees.³ The strategy involves the initial containment of party participants and identification of offenders, including the supplier of alcohol to underage youth. It also educates hosts and attendees about the harms of underage drinking. The police then release the youth to their parents or legal guardians to reduce injury and minimize liability to all involved parties.

Coalition Collaboration

Coalitions can be of great assistance for law enforcement during a Controlled Party Dispersal event. They can form a response team to work with law enforcement to process the scene after the initial law enforcement contact. Volunteers can gather information for reports, ensure equipment is ready, fill out citations and referral forms, contact parents or guardians and assist with release procedures.

Controlled Party Dispersals also should have a Party Prevention Campaign component. Coalitions can create safe party campaigns that provide information to parents and other adults to assist them in keeping their party alcohol-free and safe. Additionally, coalitions can focus on party identification. They can sponsor hotlines and text to tip lines to report underage drinking parties to law enforcement.

Permissive Social Norms

Permissive Social Norms are the expectations, behaviors, attitudes or values that convey acceptance of alcohol use by the family, community or peers.

Special Events Management (Events Restrictions)

Alcohol restrictions at community events include policies that control the availability and use of alcohol at public venues, such as concerts, street fairs and sporting events. Special Events Management is a law enforcement training that focuses on event planning and enforcement strategies to keep the event safe and under control. This strategy is appropriate if your data reflect permissive social norms or social access.

How They Work

Such restrictions can be implemented voluntarily by event organizers or through local legislation. Efforts include total bans on alcohol consumption at certain times or places, designated drinking and alcohol-free areas, prohibition of alcohol beverages in open containers, limits on the number of alcohol beverages per sale and establishment of standard enforcement procedures for monitoring and violation.⁴ Law enforcement can take the lead in training volunteers to properly check IDs and work with event organizers to set alcohol perimeters. They work in an incident command structure to ensure that efforts are implemented correctly.

Coalition Collaboration

Coalitions can educate municipal and elected officials about why alcohol should be restricted at community events. They can help plan events. Coalition members can also promote Beverage Alcohol Sellers and Servers Education and Training (BASSET) for all event volunteers who serve alcohol. During the event, coalition members can assist alcohol enforcement officers with data collection, paperwork and media relations.



Low Perceived Risk

Low Perceived Risk is the perception among youth that there is little to no risk of physical harm and/or legal or social consequences of alcohol use.

Roadside Sobriety Checkpoints

A **sobriety checkpoint** is a law enforcement tool to detect and deter impaired driving

How They Work

Officers set up a checkpoint on a roadway to stop vehicles to check for impaired drivers. The checkpoint can be utilized to identify alcohol impairment or another drug impairment. They are conducted in a fixed location and vehicles are stopped according to a pre-determined plan (every car, every other car, every fourth car, etc.). During the stop, officers engage the driver in a brief conversation to determine if the driver is impaired. If the driver is found to be impaired, appropriate enforcement action is taken. If it is determined the driver is not impaired, they are allowed to proceed. The length of the stop is short and a nonimpaired driver's interaction with law enforcement is minimally intrusive.

Coalition Collaboration

Coalitions can play a crucial role in building support for this strategy. They can compile and present data that reflect low perceived risk. Coalition members can make flyers or brochures highlighting the data and why the checkpoints are being implemented. Law enforcement can distribute the flyers during the checkpoint to educate drivers about why they are being stopped. Coalitions also can engage youth to find out where they would like to see checkpoints.



Other Law Enforcement Training Areas

Legal Considerations for Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL)

Legal Considerations for EUDL provides a review of alcohol-related laws. Law enforcement personnel learn which laws are most effective in addressing underage drinking and the provision of alcohol to minors. They also learn how the use of home rule and local ordinances may influence the level of enforcement and effectiveness and how current changes in laws may affect or enhance enforcement efforts.

Illegal ID Detection

Illegal ID Detection is a law enforcement course that extensively covers categories of fraudulent identification, how and when to card and sanctions to deter their use. Fraudulent IDs are a concern because youth use them to access illegal products such as alcohol. There are three different basic categories of illegal IDs: counterfeit/fraudulent IDs not made by a government body; altered IDs, officially issued government documents that have been changed and borrowed; or imposter IDs, officially issued government documents that do not belong to the person presenting them.

Counterfeit/fraudulent IDs are becoming more mainstream. Youth purchase them online, providing the seller with personal and sensitive information. Many youths do not realize they may be victims of identity theft as a result. The IDs are relatively inexpensive and are sold in bulk.

The State of Illinois can suspend or revoke driving privileges for fraudulent ID usage and possession. Law enforcement officers are given guidance on how and when to contact the Secretary of State's office.



APRC Law Enforcement Trainings

The Alcohol Policy Resource Center at Prevention First provides resources, tools, training and assistance in evidence-based alcohol policies and environmental strategies to municipal leaders, coalitions, and law enforcement.

The Alcohol Policy Resource Center has partnered with the Illinois Liquor Control Commission Division of Enforcement to provide Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board-Certified Alcohol Compliance Check training to law enforcement throughout Illinois. This training meets the 4-hour statutory requirement, giving law enforcement one hour for procedural justice and one hour for legal updates (mandatory training hours). Law Enforcement will also receive an Alcohol Compliance Check Youth Training Toolkit.

For more information or to schedule an Alcohol Compliance Check training, contact the APRC at aprc@prevention.org.

Funded in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery through a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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- 1 Reducing Alcohol Sales to Underage Purchasers – A Practical Guide to Compliance Investigations – 2010 Revision - Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation – In support of OJJDP – Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program.
 - 2 PIRE 2000
 - 3 A Practical Guide to Preventing and Dispersing Underage Drinking Parties – Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation – In support of OJJDP – Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program. 2000, 2005, & 2011 Page 14
 - 4 University of Minnesota Alcohol Epidemiology Program. Policies to Reduce Social Access to Alcohol. Web. August 2017



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