

ALCOHOL COMPLIANCE CHECK DETAILS VERSUS AUDITS

What are Details & Audits?



Compliance check details are a cost-effective strategy that controls youth access to alcohol from retail outlets. They use underage volunteers to test retailers' compliance with laws regarding the sale of alcohol to minors.

The 2016 Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) (2016) describes the use of compliance checks as "an effective way to reduce alcohol consumption by minors."

Compliance check details are different from audits. In Illinois, enforcement (and licensed alcohol retailers) are authorized by statute to conduct alcohol compliance checks. Enforcement must complete a four-hour training session if they are the supervising officer of the alcohol compliance check detail. Coalitions or non-enforcement entities can conduct alcohol compliance audits.

Illinois Law Governing Alcohol Compliance Check Details

235 ILCS 5/6-16.1 allows retailers and local law enforcement to conduct compliance checks to ensure compliance with the Liquor Control Act. The Act:

- Requires the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board to develop a Model Policy and Guidelines for conducting compliance checks.
- Requires individuals assigned to supervise compliance checks to be trained in a course approved by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board.
- Requires a local liquor commissioner or unit of local government that conducts alcohol compliance operations to establish a policy and standards for compliance operations.

How Alcohol Compliance Check Details Work

Under the supervision of law enforcement, youth under twenty-one 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 an underage buyer, the law enforcement officer would intervene and take appropriate action to address the illegal sale.

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. However, coalitions cannot conduct alcohol compliance checks without a trained law enforcement officer. Coalitions can conduct alcohol compliance audits.



Law Enforcement Baseline Audit



Determine a representative sample to audit



Use youthful-looking adults (over 21)



Educational not punitive



Non-Law Enforcement Audit

How Alcohol Compliance Audits Work

Alcohol Compliance Audits are commonly used to establish a baseline for local compliance rates. They have also been referred to as Secret Shopper programs. However, they function differently from alcohol compliance check details. The first difference is that volunteers are of legal age but youthful-looking. The second difference is that audits are educational opportunities, not punitive. Because the volunteer is of age, no violation will have occurred. Coalitions and retailers can conduct these to obtain a baseline. Baseline data can be paired with youth survey data on retail access to build a case for implementing and funding alcohol compliance checks.

How the APRC Can Assist



The Alcohol Policy Resource Center at Prevention First provides resources, tools, training, and assistance in developing 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's 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 four-hour statutory requirement, allocating 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.