



A Message from the District Attorney
Madeline Singas

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Nassau County’s Social Host Law is an effort to give parents the security of knowing that their children are not being served alcohol in another home. It also gives parents another reason to say “no” when their own children pressure them into hosting a party with alcohol.

The law applies to anyone who is 18 years or older; who owns, rents or otherwise controls a private residence; and knows or has a reason to know that alcoholic beverages are being consumed by a person less than 21 years of age on the premises. **The penalties include fines, a criminal conviction and up to a year in jail for repeat offers.**

Nassau County’s “Social Host” Law is intended to keep young people safe from the hazards associated with underage drinking. In addition to drunk driving, offenses like assault, criminal mischief and even teenage suicides are far more prevalent when alcohol is involved.

Underage drinking creates dangers for our young people, for our families and for our neighborhoods. Together, we can make sure that we have healthy and safe children.

Madeline Singas
District Attorney

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SOCIAL HOST LAW:

Q: What if I’m not home at the time of the drinking?

A: If you are not home and did not know alcohol would be served to minors you are not liable. If you knew or had a history of providing alcohol and leaving, you could be charged.

Q: What if my 18 year old son has a party that I don’t know about?

A: You cannot be charged but your son can.

Q: Can a landlord be charge if he or she does not reside at the location?

A: If the landlord is on notice that the property is being used for underage drinking and takes no corrective action, the landlord can be charged.

Q: Will a Social Host law conviction be on my record?

A: Yes, it is a criminal conviction.

Q: Are there insurance implications?

A: Depending on your policy, your insurance may not cover an incident arising out of a Social Host violation.



IMPORTANT EXCEPTIONS:

Reasonable Corrective Action:

- ◆ *If the person in control of the premises, the host, learns of under age consumption, the host will not be subject to “Social Host” sanctions if the host makes a prompt demand of the underage drinker to forfeit the alcoholic beverage and discontinue drinking it; or to depart from the premises.*
- ◆ **If the demands are rejected, the host must promptly report the underage consumption to local law enforcement, or any person with a greater degree of authority over the minor, such as a parent or guardian.**

Other exceptions:

- ◆ *Underage consumption of alcohol when the minor’s parent or guardian is actually present and has expressly consented.*
- ◆ *The use and consumption of alcohol by a minor for religious purposes.*

START TALKING BEFORE THEY START DRINKING

Kids who drink before age 15 are 5 times more likely to have alcohol problems when they’re adults.
To learn more, go to www.stopalcoholabuse.gov or call 1.800.729.6686

WHO IS SUBJECT TO THE SOCIAL HOST LAW?

Anyone 18 years or older, who:

- ◆ Owns, rents, or otherwise controls a private residence, and
- ◆ Knows or has reason to know that alcoholic beverages are being consumed by a person less than 21 years of age on the premises

CRIMINAL PENALTIES

The Social Host law created a criminal misdemeanor charge for anyone who violates the law.

The penalties include a criminal conviction on your record, fines and potential jail time for repeat offenders. The penalties are:

- ◆ First Offense—a \$250 fine and a criminal conviction
- ◆ Second Offense—a \$500 fine and a criminal conviction
- ◆ Third Offense—a \$1,000 fine and/or up to a year in jail



UNDERAGE DRINKING STARTS WITH AN ADULT

Common excuses include:

- ◆ “We drank at 18 and turned out fine.”
- ◆ “Kids will be kids. You can’t stop them.”
- ◆ “What’s the big deal?”
- ◆ “It’s OK with me if my son has a beer. He knows his limit.”
- ◆ “It is better if she drinks at home with her friends than in a parking lot somewhere.”

But the consequences can be criminal and even deadly.

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NASSAU COUNTY SOCIAL HOST LAW