

For immediate release: Thursday 13 September 2018

Parents back restricting booze supply to teens

New research from health promotion foundation VicHealth shows most parents back tougher restrictions on the supply of alcohol to underage Victorians, as new laws come into effect today.

Today's changes to the [Liquor Control Reform Act](#) include tougher requirements on parents hosting underage parties. The old Act required party hosts to gain consent from parents of underage kids, usually in the form of handwritten notes.

Now in addition to gaining consent, parents are required by law to actively police underage teens' drinking, including monitoring how much and what kind of alcohol they've consumed, if they've eaten and if teens are intoxicated.

VicHealth research shows parents want greater control over how and when their teen drinks, with 60 per cent of parents believing there are no circumstances where other parents of adults should supply booze to underage teens at parties.

The survey also showed that parents are unsure about the harm from alcoholic drinks on their teens and how best to introduce them to drinking, with only 37 per cent understanding it's best not to supply teenagers with alcohol to protect them from harm.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter welcomed the changes to the Act and said parents needed support in how best to keep teens safe from harm from alcoholic drinks.

"The new Liquor Control Reform Act is great news for parents as it takes steps to prevent teenagers from drinking at risky levels at parties," Ms Rechter said.

"Our research clearly shows that parents want to be in charge of when, where and how much their kids drink. We all want our kids to come home safe from parties.

"We want parents to understand that under the new law they are responsible for the wellbeing of teenagers if they host a party with alcoholic drinks."

VicHealth Principal Program Officer for Alcohol Maya Ravis and parent of teenagers Annabelle and Thomas said it was really important for parents to know what they can and can't do under the new law.

"As a parent it can be really tricky hosting parties where alcohol is served. You need to think about getting consent from other parents as well as making sure kids aren't drinking too much," Ms Ravis said.

"We recommend that parents don't supply alcoholic drinks to underage teens – it's risky for their health, it can cause parties to get out of control and you need to be careful you comply with the law.

"If you are going to serve alcohol, for example at an 18th birthday, there are some things you really need to keep in mind.

"Make sure you get written consent from parents of underage kids, make sure you're clear that intoxication won't be tolerated and that anyone arriving drunk will be refused entry.

Media Contact

Rachel Murphy Senior Media Advisor on 03 9667 1319 /0435 761 732 rmurphy@vichealth.vic.gov.au

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“It’s also a good idea to register the party with police and of course make sure you serve lots of food and non-alcoholic drinks.”

Ms Ravis said it was great to see the Act also covers licensed venues and alcohol delivery services.

“We know that alcohol delivery services are increasingly popular so it’s great to see penalties for deliverers who knowingly sell alcohol to someone underage.”

For more information about the changes to the Liquor Control Reform Act visit:

<https://www.vcglr.vic.gov.au/changes-liquor-control-reform-act-1998>

TOP TIPS FOR PARENT PARTY-HOSTS

- Make your party a booze-free zone – plan party activities with your kids like games, karaoke, dancing, pool or movies
- Register the party with the police. This can be done online using the Partysafe Registration Form, or at your local police station.
- Make sure you have an insurance policy that includes public liability insurance.

If you’re serving alcohol at a party:

- Get underage guests to provide written consent from parents – and a phone number to back it up.
- On party invitations, be clear if alcohol will be provided/permitted and your expectations on drinking behavior.
- Emphasise that intoxication won’t be tolerated – the purpose of the party is to have a good time, not to get drunk. Let kids know that you’ll call the parents of anyone who gets drunk .
- Refuse entry to anyone who arrives drunk.
- Provide appropriate adult supervision and/or hire security. Supervising adults should not drink alcohol during the party.
- If people bring their own alcoholic drinks, store them in an area so it is possible to supervise who is accessing the drinks. Ideally put all drinks behind a supervised bar area and require people to request their drinks from a non-drinking adult.
- Provide lots of food and a wide variety of foods. Try to avoid serving very salty snacks as they make people thirsty and could cause people to drink more.
- Provide lots of water and alternative drinks to alcohol. Make sure these drinks are easy to access, ideally easier to access than the alcohol.

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Notes to editors:

Changes to the Liquor Control Reform Act (LCRA)

1. Supply of liquor to minors in private residences to be responsible

Currently, the LCRA allows supply of alcohol to a minor in a private residence by a parent or guardian, or by someone authorised by the parent or guardian.

The amendment to the LCRA introduces an additional requirement that the adult supplying alcohol to a minor must demonstrate responsible supervision of the minor, taking into account factors including:

- the minor's age
- whether the adult serving alcohol is intoxicated
- whether the minor consumes food with the alcohol
- whether the adult is supervising the minor's consumption of the alcohol
- the quantity and type of alcohol, and the time period over which it is supplied
- whether the minor is intoxicated.

2. Removal of exemptions allowing supply of liquor to a minor in licensed premises

The amendment to the LCRA removes the exemption that allowed receipt, possession or consumption of liquor by a minor in licensed premises, including the exemption allowing a minor to consume liquor as part of a meal if accompanied by a parent, guardian or spouse.

3. Prohibition of delivery of liquor to a minor

The amendment will create a new offence in the LCRA which prohibits a person, without reasonable excuse, from knowingly delivering alcoholic drinks to a person under 18 years of age.

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