



Elk Grove Police Department

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Elk Grove Police Department Runs Decoy Operations in Attempt to Reduce Underage Drinking

ELK GROVE, CA – Officers from the Elk Grove Police Department’s Problem Oriented Policing Unit issued citations to one clerk for selling alcohol to a minor, and two adults who purchased alcohol for minors between July and August of 2010. The actions were the result of a Minor Decoy Operation and Decoy Shoulder Tap Operation.

The Minor Decoy Operation involves minors, who work under the direct supervision of officers, attempted to purchase alcohol from 31 retail licensees in the City of Elk Grove.

Those who sold to the minor face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) will take administrative action against the alcoholic beverage license of the business. That may include a fine, a suspension of the license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

In addition to the Minor Decoy Operation, ABC Investigators also conducted a Decoy Shoulder Tap Operation. A Decoy Shoulder Tap Operation targets adults who purchase alcohol for people less than 21 years of age. Under the program, a minor under the direct supervision of a peace officer will stand outside a liquor or convenience store and ask patrons to buy them alcohol. The minor indicates in some way he or she is underage and cannot purchase the alcohol. If the adults agree to purchase alcohol for the minor, officers then arrest and cite them for furnishing alcohol to the minor. The penalty for furnishing alcohol to a minor is a minimum \$1000 fine and 24 hours of community service.

In addition to the Minor Decoy Operation, ABC Investigators also conducted a Decoy Shoulder Tap Operation. A Decoy Shoulder Tap Operation targets adults who purchase alcohol for people less than 21 years of age. Under the program, a minor under the direct supervision of a peace officer will stand outside a liquor or convenience store and ask patrons to buy them alcohol. The minor indicates in some way he or she is underage and cannot purchase the alcohol. If the adults agree to purchase alcohol for the minor, officers then arrest and cite them for furnishing alcohol to the minor. The penalty for furnishing alcohol to a minor is a minimum \$1000 fine and 24 hours of community service.

The Elk Grove Police Department is conducting the compliance checks to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Statistics have shown that young people under the age of 21 have a higher rate of drunken driving fatalities than the general adult population.

Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10 percent or even below.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that licensees are complying with the law.

This project is part of the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control's Minor Decoy/Shoulder Tap Grant Project, funded by the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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