

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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SDPD and ABC Cite Clerk for Selling Alcohol to Minor

Operation in San Diego Designed to Prevent Alcohol-Related Harm

San Diego – A store clerk sold alcohol to a minor during The San Diego Police Department’s Vice Unit along with an agent of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) [Minor Decoy](#) operation on November 16, 2024. The operation consisted of minors under the direct supervision of department agents who attempted to purchase alcohol from eight retail licensees in San Diego.

Clerks who sold to minors can face a minimum fine of \$250, and 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC may take administrative action against the alcoholic beverage license of the business where alcohol was sold to a minor. That may include a fine, suspension, or the permanent revocation of the license.

“Conducting these operations allows us to help reduce underage drinking and increase public safety,” said SDPD Vice Lieutenant Phil Konz.

Statistics have shown that young people under the age of 21 have a much higher risk of being involved in a crash than older drivers. [About 25 percent of fatal crashes involve underage drinking](#) according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

“Businesses should always check IDs before selling alcohol,” said ABC Director Joseph McCullough.

“Preventing access to people not old enough to legally purchase alcohol improves safety on our roadways and in our communities.”

Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980s. 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 to below 10 percent

in some cities. In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of minor decoys is a valid legal tool of law enforcement to make sure that licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from ABC through the department's [Alcohol Policing Partnership \(APP\)](#) program.

About the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control

The Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) is an agency of the government of the state of California charged with the regulation of alcoholic beverages. ABC's mission is to provide the highest level of service and public safety to the people of California through licensing, education, and enforcement. ABC is a department of the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency.

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