

Minor Decoy

Reducing underage drinking

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission's (OLCC) minor decoy program is designed to reduce the availability of alcohol beverages to minors, increase ID checking of people who appear under age 26, and efficiently use OLCC staff resources to achieve a maximum reduction in illegal sales.

Strong program standards

As a part of efforts to assure that licensees appropriately sell and serve alcohol, the OLCC has 18-, 19- or 20-year-old volunteers who look under the age of 26, attempt to buy alcohol at liquor stores, licensed businesses and other locations such as special events. If asked for identification, the decoys either show their own valid identification or say they have no identification with them.

Sales of alcoholic beverages to minors, including decoys, and failure to properly check identification result in administrative sanctions to liquor licensees, liquor store agents, or service permittees, and possible criminal sanctions to others. The OLCC offers educational training to licensees, liquor store agents, and their staff on preventing sales to minors, checking identification, and recognizing false identification.

Random or targeted visits

All licensees, agents and their employees are subject to a decoy visit. The OLCC selects premises for decoy visits on a random or targeted basis in compliance with ORS 471.346 and OAR 845-009-0200. A selected premises will be visited at least once during a 12-month period. An OLCC manager may authorize multiple visits if he/she believes that alcohol sales to minors are likely to continue.

Selection of premises is done by simple random sampling, which ensures to the greatest extent possible that each licensee or liquor agent has an equal chance of being selected. This simple random sampling may be performed using a variety of generally accepted simple random sampling tools, such as a random number table, a random number generator, or other method.

Targeted selection of premises is done for a single licensee or liquor agent, but may be used only if there is a documented compliance problem with the specific licensee or agent.

A documented compliance problem means the OLCC or other law enforcement has received one or more documented complaints about a business, agent, licensee or license applicant alleging one or more of the following:

- Failed to check, or properly check identification;
- Allowed minors in prohibited areas;

(over)

9079 SE McLoughlin Blvd. • Portland, OR 97222-7355
Ph (503) 872-5070 • Fax (503) 872-5074 • Toll free (800) 452-6522
www.olcc.state.or.us

Promoting Responsible Alcohol Sales and Service

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- Allowed minors to consume alcohol;
- Sold alcohol to minors; or

The business, agent, licensee or license applicant has received one or more citations, or administrative notices of warning or notices of violation tickets for:

- Failing to check or properly check identification;
- Allowing minors in prohibited areas;
- Allowing minors to consume alcohol;
- Selling alcohol to minors; or
- The business, licensee or license applicant is operating under a 90-day letter of authority to sell/serve alcohol and there is a past history of alcohol violations.

Strong program procedures

Licensees

The OLCC notifies all licensees and liquor agents that we and other law enforcement agencies conduct decoy operations. We give this notification to new licensees and agents when they receive their licenses or contract, and to other licensees and agents annually. The notification includes an offering of training on ID checking, and prevention of alcohol sales to minors. OLCC also issues formal tickets of appreciation to alcohol servers and sellers who use extra efforts in refusing to sell alcohol to minors.

District attorney

The OLCC staff and district attorneys' offices around the state work closely to ensure OLCC decoy operations comply with legal positions.

Local law enforcement

The OLCC cooperates with local law enforcement agencies to share information and coordinate decoy operations. Police officers may accompany OLCC staff on OLCC decoy visits. OLCC staff may accompany police on their decoy visits.

Media

OLCC works with the media to publicize the program. OLCC may release the names of the businesses involved in the program and the results of the purchase attempts.

Standards for OLCC violations

The OLCC will charge a licensee or permittee with an administrative violation and sanction only when police or the OLCC minor decoy meets all of the following standards:

- The minor decoy must be under the age of 21
- The minor decoy must look under the age of 26
- The minor decoy may not use false identification
- The minor decoy may not lie about his/her age

For more information contact:

Janice Kindrick
Enforcement and Field Operations
phone: 503-872-5196
fax: 503-872-74
e-mail: janice.kindrick@state.or.us