



Raising Healthy Teens

Promoting the Health & Safety
of Rhode Island Teens

Spring 2019

Social Host Laws and What Parents Who Host Should Know

With prom celebrations, graduation parties and summer festivities soon to be upon us, we wanted to make sure you are aware of the laws before you host a party for what might include minors.

On average, alcohol plays a role in the deaths of 4,358 young people under age 21 every year, including:

1,580 deaths from car crashes

1,269 from murders

245 from alcohol poisoning, falls, burns, and drowning

492 from suicides



It is against the law in Rhode Island, for a host to “permit” an underage person to consume alcohol. “Permit” is defined as *to give permission for, or approval of, the possession or consumption of an alcoholic beverage*

by any form of conduct, that would cause a reasonable person to believe that permission or approval has been given.

Social Host Law Consequences:

- First offense is a misdemeanor punishable by a minimum fine of \$350 and a maximum fine of \$1,000, and/or a prison sentence not to exceed six months.
- Second offense is a misdemeanor punishable by a minimum fine of \$750 and maximum fine of \$1,000, and/or a prison sentence not to exceed one year.
- Third and subsequent offenses are a felony punishable by minimum fine of \$1,000 and maximum fine of \$2,500, and/or a prison sentence not to exceed 3 years.
- For 18- to 21-year-olds, there may be a civil penalty of not more than \$500 and required attendance at an educational program to recognize the dangers of underage drinking, and completion of up to 30 hours of community service.

Hosting a party with underage drinking can be a dangerous situation. As a community, we need to respect our teens by providing safe and enjoyable experiences. Let’s join together to reduce underage drinking for the safety of our community.

Make Prom Season Memorable



Many parents put in a lot of work to help make their teen's prom memorable. Statistics show approximately one-third of alcohol-related teen traffic fatalities occur during peak prom season (April and June), with accidents the leading cause of death for those between 12 and 19 years of age. Parents who

establish guidelines and discuss expectations for prom with their teen can literally save lives.

Communicate Expectations Prom and graduation season are another opportunity to reinforce alcohol and drug use expectations. As students might be feeling more independent with college looming, it is important to help them successfully navigate prom-related temptations and potential peer pressures.

Agree on Your Teen's Plans for the Night Communicate curfews and meet your child when they arrive home. Don't allow for large unaccountable time frames as that can foster dangerous situations. If there is a private family-hosted after-party, connect with the host parents about supervision and confirm alcohol will not be available.

Support Plans for Safety It's a good idea to meet your child's prom date before the event. Encourage driving arrangements of a limo or older sibling to reduce the possibility of distracted driving. Create a plan with your child that can be used if a pick-up is needed some time during the night. Research has proven that discussions between parents and teens about possible scenarios at prom increases safe decision-making.

Monitor Pre-Prom and Post-Prom Activities Consider hosting a pre-prom reception where no alcohol is served. Don't approve after-prom plans at the beach or distant location. Late night driving exponentially increases the likelihood of accidents.

Encourage School-Sponsored Post-Prom Events Schools that host after-prom parties have dramatically decreased post-prom accidents and issues. Consider providing school sponsored transportation to the prom and back to after-prom as another key to a safe and fun night. With some simple guidelines and a reminder of parents' expectations, prom can be memorable and magical for all.

How to Write a Safe Prom Plan



According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, more than 2,600 teens died in motor vehicle crashes in 2014 and roughly a third of those deaths occurred during the months of April, May and June — "Prom Season" across America.

Recent statistics only affirm parents' concerns about teenage consumption of alcohol — and prom night has been seen as a rite of passage for some adolescents.

Sadly, some adults have a relaxed attitude around underage drinking and sometimes even allow it in their homes, especially around special events like the prom. Some parents feel they have little to worry about as long as their kids aren't driving.

Here's a four-step plan that may help you keep your prom-goers safe.

1. Talk to your teens honestly about what you fear could happen if they or friends use alcohol and drugs. Share your feelings. It's all about letting them see and feel how much you care.
2. Arrange transportation in advance. Ask your teen to promise NOT to ride with someone who's been drinking or using drugs, even if it's the designated driver. Instead, call home for a ride, anytime, no questions asked.
3. Put a time-line on paper that says where you and your teen will be, hour by hour, on prom night. Agree on a curfew.
4. Use cell phones and schedule "quick" check-in calls or texts throughout the evening. Make sure they're having fun — and feeling safe.

Going Out Tonight?



So Are We.

Police Party Patrols will be out in our communities, working to keep our roads and neighborhoods safe.



RI RESOURCES

BH Link Hotline — 401-414-LINK (414-5465)
24/7 call center connecting people to care and resources.

National Suicide Hotline 1-800-273-TALK (273-8255)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

Samaritans www.samaritansri.org/our-programs/hotline

Change Direction (Mental/Emotional Health)
www.changedirection.org/

RI Smoker's Helpline 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)
Tobacco Free RI www.tobaccofree-ri.org/

Alcoholics Anonymous (401) 438-8860
www.rhodeisland-aa.org

Parents Support Network of RI
(401) 467-6855 or (800) 483-8844 www.psnri.org

DRUGS 101

What Parents Should Know



OTC Medication Safety *Time to Count It. Lock It. Drop It!*

Since OTC is "over-the-counter" medications, which do not require physician guidance, we need to be vigilant in understanding the correct use, dosages, side-effects and disposal. OTC medicines must be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), so you will see a "drug facts" label based on the rules from the FDA for the medicine.

Follow the OTC medicine's direction for dosage and length of use to avoid unintended side-effects or consequences. Be aware of expiration dates, when the medicine is no longer effective and safe for use.

Discuss your OTC medicines with your doctor to make sure there are no adverse drug interactions, and that they are best for your symptoms and health.

Make sure to secure all medications, including OTC medicines, at home by counting and locking up pills to help reduce access to potentially dangerous or addictive medication.

When disposing of expired or unneeded OTC medicines, mix them with an unpalatable substance (like used coffee grounds or kitty litter), place the mixture in a sealed plastic bag, and then put in trash.

National Take-Back Day Saturday, April 27, 10am – 2pm

National Take-Back Day, sponsored by the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is a safe, convenient, and responsible way to dispose of unused or expired prescription drugs at your local police station for drop-off and safe disposal.

Teachable Moments for Parents and Teens from TV & Movies

Being a parent is about teaching, nurturing and guiding as we help our children grow in confidence to make independent positive decisions. There are certainly times for scheduled “big talks” on life issues, expectations and current challenges, however, the organic conversations can be very powerful when in the context of something viewed when watching television or a movie together.



Media, in the forms of television and movies, can reflect what a teenager might think is accepted behavior. With the inclusion of violence, drinking, sex, treatment of people and many other topics, it is the perfect

time to pause to discuss perception vs. reality. When viewing subjects that might include socially unacceptable behaviors, it provides the perfect opportunity for a parent to discuss values, expectations and behaviors that would be more appropriate.

Watching a show or movie together can be a powerful and engaging way to generate important dialogue. It is a way to listen to their perspective on how what they are seeing is forming opinions and/or understandings.

Shows and movies can be created to be unrealistic or supernatural so it is important to be able to identify what is “real,” and what is for creative freedom and entertainment value.

By guiding your child in what they are seeing and the messages that are being expressed, you are helping them to think critically, and evaluate what they are viewing within a foundation of values. By having these conversations we are establishing behaviors we want for our children, and opening the door for conversations about topics that are important.

Student Assistance Counselors: How YOU Can Benefit

The middle and high school years can be tough on teens with heightened social pressure, increased academic demands, and navigating how to be more independent in making successful choices. We want our children to thrive, but understand much more going on in their lives beyond books and homework.

To help students understand more about themselves, reduce stress, increase balance and learn to follow their passions, schools provide Student Assistance Counselors (SACs). A SAC is a professionally trained expert available at no-cost for your student and provides confidential support.

A student might see a SAC for anxiety, depression, isolation, bereavement, family divorce, bullying, school pressure or whatever might be keeping them from being able to focus during their school day. SACs are particularly concerned with helping students who are at risk of problems associated substance use, whether it is their own use or someone they care about. The SACs are in school to offer any support a student might need.

SACs help with coping skills and provide guidance for a range of emotional struggles, within a safe and supportive environment. The SACs work with the school’s guidance counselors, nurses and psychologists to provide an emotional safety net, individually and in groups. If you are thinking your child could benefit from talking with a SAC, please contact your child’s school office to learn more on how we can work together to provide your child with some extra help.

Ways a Student Assistance Counselors Can Help

- **Prevention Education** – Alcohol, tobacco/vaping and other drug prevention education is offered by the SAC.
- **Individual and Group Counseling** – SACs conduct individual sessions and/or group counseling with students at school along with education and individual assessment.
- **Parent Programs** – SACs work with parents as collaborative partners in prevention through education programs.
- **Referral** – Students and parents who require treatment, more intensive counseling, or other services are referred to appropriate agencies or practitioners in the community.



For more information on your regional coalition, please visit us at www.riprevention.org

The Coalitions are federally funded organizations providing leadership for youth substance use prevention and mental health promotion.