

# Frequently Asked Questions about Alcohol Service

## What happens if I sell alcohol to an underage person?

Selling alcohol to someone under 21 can result in criminal charges against you. If injury or death occurs because you sold alcohol to someone under 21, you can be sued in civil court.

## Do I have to card everyone? Even if I know them?

For alcohol, it is your legal responsibility to make sure the person is 21 or older. However, the law does not say you must check an ID.

It is always safer to check an ID. The law can protect you from being convicted for selling to an underage person if you can show that you checked the customer's ID and verified that the customer was at least 21-years-old.

**CAUTION:** Some clerks check an ID only once, and then rely on that for future purchases. This is dangerous if it turns out to be an underage person using a fake ID, because it becomes your word against that person's.

## What are the acceptable forms of ID?

Only [4 kinds of IDs](#) are valid for determining proof of age:

- driver's license
- CA ID card
- military ID
- passport



## How do you tell if an ID is fake?

There are several indicators:

- Compare the person in the picture to the one who is presenting it.
- Feel the ID for cuts in the birthdate and/or picture area.
- Compare the identification document to the ID checking guide.
- Look for different types of ink on the ID.
- Look for color contrasts.

Overall, trust your instincts. Remember, you have the right to refuse sale to anyone for any reason. Better safe than sorry.

## If I see a fake ID, what do I do with it?

It is not recommended to take a fake ID unless there is law enforcement in attendance. Before you turn return the ID, you can get as much information as possible then turn it over to a law enforcement officer, including:

- date and time ID was taken,
- name of clerk who took the ID,
- what was attempted to be purchased



## When do I need to refuse a sale?

You have the right to refuse the sale of alcoholic beverages to any person for any reason. Refuse the sale if:

- Person fails to show proper ID;
- Person appears to be under age 21;
- Person appears to be drunk;
- You suspect person may be buying alcohol for someone under 21 or for someone who already has been refused a sale;
- Or you suspect any other possible violation.

Remember, it's better to be safe than sorry.

**Note:** No one may refuse to sell alcoholic beverages to a person solely based on that person's race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability.



## How many drinks can I serve one individual?

You may serve according to the policy set by your organization  
You can't sell any alcohol to a person if he or she appears to be drunk.



## How do you determine if a person is drunk?

There are a number of factors to look for when determining if a person is

drunk, such as:

- Number of drinks a person has consumed
- Loud, obnoxious behavior
- Unsteady on their feet
- Mumbled speech
- Trouble handling money
- Trouble lighting a cigarette
- Red, flushed face
- Bloodshot eyes
- Strong odor of alcohol
- Disheveled clothing

## How do I cut someone off, without making them mad?

Blame it on law enforcement. Tell the person you have been warned by the police not to over-serve patrons. Tell them you get routine checks you to see if you are obeying the law and you could lose your ABC permits. Offer them non-alcoholic alternatives, such as soda or coffee.

## If a person is drunk but will not be driving, why can't we continue to serve them alcohol?

Unfortunately driving under the influence isn't the only danger associated with being drunk. Fights, walking into traffic, etc. can often times be a result and tragedy of intoxication.



## What are serving and selling practices that reduce the likelihood for illegal sales?

Recommendations for stores:

- Develop clear and concise alcohol policies.
- Consistently enforce these policies.
- Train employees and frequently refresh them on store policies.
- Notify local law enforcement of attempts of underage persons to purchase alcohol
- Recognize and reward employees for responsible alcohol service
- Display in-store signage (for customers and employees) about your commitment to being a responsible seller/server.
- Establish limited lanes for alcohol sales