

Strict underage drinking laws can have lasting effects for teens

Written by Australian Business

DETROIT, MI, September 18, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- Every day, about 27 people are killed in the U.S. from alcohol-related car crashes, according to MADD. Car accidents are the main cause of preventable death for teenagers, and a staggering one fourth of all teen auto accident deaths involve an underage driver. Since up to 15 percent of underage drivers admitted to drinking and driving at some point during the past year, it can be assumed that at least some of these accidents can be attributed to alcohol use by the driver.

Teens who make the choice to drive drunk can [face serious consequences](#) that may affect them for a lifetime. An 18-year-old girl from Muskegon admitted in court to driving while drunk last year, as reported by Mlive.com. Her blood alcohol content was almost three times the legal limit at the time she hit a newspaper carrier with her vehicle, severely injuring the carrier.

To protect young drivers from being charged with a crime, as well as to protect others from being hurt by underage drinking and driving, Michigan laws regarding underage DUI are strict. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism says that people under age 21 will be charged with a crime if there is any detectable amount of alcohol in their system while they're driving.

Perhaps as a result of strict laws and penalties regarding underage drinking in most states, deaths caused by underage drinking and driving have fallen about 54 percent since 1991. However, the Centers for Disease Control report that drivers under the age of 21 still get behind the wheel while intoxicated a shocking 2.4 million times a month in the U.S.

Preventing underage drinking and driving

Helping teens to make good driving decisions starts with early education and active parental involvement, says the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Parents can give their kids a good foundation by:

Being a strong and positive role model about driving and drinking responsibly. Setting and enforcing rules about underage drinking. Being aware of kids' activities, parties, etc. Parents who take an active and supportive role in communicating and interacting with their kids have a better chance of steering them away from choices that can impact their future.

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Contacting an attorney

Teenagers are known for sometimes making decisions without fully understanding the consequences. Depending on the severity of the charges, a minor can face license suspension or revocation, fines, community service, probation and even jail time. These penalties can go on to affect a teen's school and personal life, and can last into adulthood. If a young person is arrested for underage drinking and driving in Michigan, it's important to speak to an experienced drunk driving defense attorney. An attorney may be able to get some charges lessened or dropped altogether.