

UNDERSTANDING A SOCIAL HOST ORDINANCE

Underage parties? If you're aware, you're responsible.

A Social Host Ordinance (SHO) holds individuals (social hosts) criminally responsible for hosting or allowing an event on private or public property where persons under age 21 possess or consume alcohol, regardless of who supplies the alcohol to the minors.

This ordinance applies to situations in which:

- The social host **knows or reasonably should know** that alcohol is being possessed or consumed by underage persons at their residence or premises or at any event they are hosting on public or private property.
- The social host fails to take reasonable steps to prevent possession or consumption by underage persons.

Violation of the ordinance will be a misdemeanor subject to a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine.

What a Social Host Ordinance is NOT:

- Parents cannot be charged for allowing or permitting alcohol use by their own child while present in their own household.
- Individuals cannot be charged if they take steps to prevent the underage drinking once they realize it is occurring.



In addition to the Sherburne County-wide SHO, local ordinances are in place for Becker, Big Lake, Clear Lake, Elk River, Princeton, St. Cloud, and Zimmerman.

23% of Sherburne County students who reported consuming alcohol in the past month said they obtained the alcohol from parties.¹

59% of adults in Sherburne County reported that adults allowing or tolerating youth alcohol use is a problem.²

1 Based on 2025 MN Student Survey data for Sherburne County grades 8, 9, & 11
2 Based on 2016 Central MN Community Health Survey

LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN FOR SAFER OPTIONS

IF YOU ARE HOSTING A TEEN PARTY...

- **Plan in advance.** Go over party plans and “rules” with your teen.
- **Have adult supervision.** Make sure at least one adult is always present. Ask other parents to come over to help if you need it.
- **Set a guest list.** The party should be for invited guests only. Ask your teen not to post party details on social media to avoid an “open party” situation.
- **Set starting & ending times for the party.** Notify your neighbors who will be affected, either by noise, traffic, or parking, of party details.
- **Have plenty of food and non-alcoholic beverages available.** Store alcohol, medications, cannabis, and commercial tobacco and nicotine products in a secure location. If alcohol is going to be available for adult guests 21+, keep it separate from non-alcoholic beverages.

IF YOUR TEEN IS GOING TO A PARTY...

- **Know where your teen is going and how long they will be there.** Have the address of the party. Ask your teen to call you if any party details change. Another option is to use a location app. These apps can monitor your child's phone use, location, and more to help keep them safe. There are several free options like Life360.
- **Call the parent of the party host** to make sure a parent will be home the entire time and supervising the party.
- **Talk with your teen beforehand** about how to handle a situation where alcohol or other drugs are available at a party.
- **Make sure your teen has a safe way to get to & from the party.** Make it clear to your teen that they can call or text at any time for a ride home. Creating a code word or phrase can make it easier for your child to ask for help.
- **Be up to greet your teen when they come home.** This can be a good way to check the time and talk about the evening.

How to Report a Possible Violation

To report parties or gatherings where minors have access to alcohol, call 9-1-1. Your call may prevent motor vehicle crashes, sexual assault, unintentional injuries, or alcohol poisoning.

For more information, visit: www.sherburnesupcoalition.org/sho

