

Description of strategy

Under social host liability laws, adults who serve or provide alcohol to minors or persons who are obviously intoxicated can be held liable if a person who is provided alcohol is killed or injured, or kills or injures another person. In some states, social host liability is covered under dram shop laws.

Dram shop liability refers to a drinking establishment's potential financial liability for serving alcohol to an intoxicated or underage person who later causes injury to a third party. However, dram shop laws normally only cover commercial service and not private parties.

Social host laws vary from state-to-state. Some state laws may only target those who provide alcohol to underage youth and do not pertain to intoxicated persons (University of Minnesota Alcohol Epidemiology Program, 2009).

North Dakota's Dram Shop addresses social host liability but has limitations in that injury must occur in order to pursue damages.

(N.D.C.C. §5-01-06.1 - Claim for relief for fault resulting from intoxication, 2013)

Discussion of effectiveness

Alcohol

Evidence is unclear on the effectiveness of social host liability laws. A study estimating the effect of social host laws involving minors found a reduction in drunk driving traffic fatalities (Dills, 2010). A similar study found laws allowing individuals to sue bars for the drunken behavior of their patrons were the policies most strongly associated with lower minor and adult fatality rates (Davies, Liang, Sloan, & Stout, 2000). However, a 2012 review of the research on current social host liability policies found that social host policies are variable and enforcement is not consistent. More research is required to develop a measure of policy strength (Wagoner et al., 2012).

Intervening Variables	
Retail Pricing	
Retail availability	
Social availability	
Law Enforcement	
Community norms	
Promotion & media	

References for description of strategy

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- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2011). Digest of impaired driving and selected beverage control laws. Retrieved August 30, 2012, from: www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/pdf/811456.pdf

Evidence base

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Further reading

- Applied Research for Community Health and Safety. (2009). Holding adults accountable for underage drinking at house parties through social host laws. San Bernardino, CA: Institute for Public Strategies. Available at: http://www.publicstrategies.org/PDF/20091015_Social_Host_While_Paper_Final_R3.pdf
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- Ventura County Behavioral Health Department. (2005). Model social host liability ordinance. Available at: http://www.ca-cpi.org/sig_subsite/sig_documents/resources/vcl_mshlo_web2.pdf