

University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown



Under 21 in PA - The "Zero Tolerance" Law

It is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 in Pennsylvania to:

- purchase,
- attempt to purchase,
- consume,
- possess,
- transport any alcohol, liquor or malt or brewed beverage,
- lie about their age, or
- carry a false I.D. card to obtain alcohol.

"ZERO TOLERANCE"

If you are caught driving with *any measurable amount* of alcohol in your blood, you may be arrested for Driving Under the Influence (DUI). (The "Zero Tolerance" law lowered the Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) for minors from .10% to .02%)

Why Zero Tolerance ?

Traffic crashes are the number one cause of death for teenagers in the United States. Young drivers between 15 and 20 years of age make up 6.8% of the total drivers involved in fatal crashes. Almost 30% of these drivers had been drinking. Each year about 1,600 Pennsylvania drivers under 21 are involved in alcohol related vehicle crashes.

Serious consequences for a DUI

If you are pulled over for suspected drunk driving, the police will ask you to take a breath, blood or urine test. If your BAC is 0.02% or higher, and are convicted of DUI, you can expect:

- up to a one year driver's license suspension,
- drug and alcohol evaluation,
- fines (up to \$500 for a first offense), court costs and restitution,
- to complete the state-approved *Alcohol Highway Safety Program*, if ordered by the court.

If you refuse to take the BAC test, your driving privileges will be suspended for one year, even if you win your DUI case.

If you are in the 18-20 age range, you may be ordered to *Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition Program* (ARD) if you qualify. If you don't qualify, you will be sentenced to 48 hours in jail.

A DUI arrest stays on your record for seven years. If you are convicted more than once, the fines, suspensions and jail time all increase.

Other penalties

Furnishing to minors. Adults who sell, furnish or purchase with the intent to sell or furnish alcohol to anyone under 21 (even their own children), or provide them a place to consume alcohol will receive a mandatory fine of \$1,000.00, and up to \$2,500.00 for each subsequent offense.

Open container. It is against the law in Pennsylvania for drivers or their passengers to consume alcohol or possess an open container of alcohol on Pennsylvania roads. (This law does not apply to passengers in a commercial transport vehicle, such as a bus, taxi, limousine, or to those riding in the living quarters of a house coach or trailer).

False I.D. It is illegal for a person to knowingly, intentionally or recklessly manufacture, make, alter, sell or attempt to sell an identification card falsely representing the identity, birth date or age of another.

(This information was adapted from the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board brochure entitled: *Under 21, Zero Tolerance*).

Contact the Web Master Team

Copyright © 2008, University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, 450 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA 15904, 814-269-7000
Last Reviewed: November 22, 2004