

## Underage Drinking Risks for Parents

In Vermont, there are some major penalties for parents who give their children alcohol or allow them to drink.

### Social Hosting

“Social Hosting” is when an adult sells or serves alcohol to anyone under the age of 21. It could be parents or other adults who give alcohol to minors, or adults who provide minors a place to drink. Social Hosting is illegal in Vermont and adults can be charged if they host a drinking party.

### No Drinking Party is Safe

There is no such thing as a safe place for underage drinking, and hosting a drinking party for your children sends a dangerous message. You are telling them that you think it is okay to break the law and it can be hard for them to know which laws should or should not be obeyed.

### Helping Kids Drink is Illegal

Parents may not:

- Give alcohol to anyone under age 21.
- Allow minors to drink alcohol on their property.

Adults may not give alcohol to anyone underage—not even their own children. In Vermont, if you give or sell alcohol to a minor, or help them buy it, you can be fined between \$500 and \$2,000 and sentenced to up to two years in jail. An adult can be charged separately for every minor they give alcohol to.

If you give alcohol to minors who drive and hurt themselves or others, you can be charged with a felony and sentenced to five years in jail and fined up to \$10,000.

If a minor drinks on your property and breaks the law, you can be charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and if someone at the party were to die, you may be charged with involuntary manslaughter.

### Financial Dangers

You can be sued for giving alcohol to minors and you can be responsible for anything that happens as a result. This includes anything that happens to minors you give or sell alcohol to, their family members, employers and other people.

Even if you don't give the alcohol, you can still be sued if you knowingly allow minors to drink on your property and they hurt themselves or others. You are still responsible even if you are not on your property while underage drinking is going on. Homeowners insurance may not cover damage or injury caused by illegal activity.

Your underage child can be sued for up to eight years following an incident, so even though they may have committed an act when they were under 18, the consequences can affect them as an adult.

For more information about the risks and consequences of underage drinking, visit [parentupvt.org](http://parentupvt.org) or dial 211.