

The Scope of the Problem

The UW-Madison has experienced problems with underage and binge drinking. Alcohol is the most commonly abused drug on the UW Campus. The vast majority of disturbance calls, verbal and physical assaults and property crimes are found to be alcohol related. Alcohol abuse is considered the number one health concern for students.

Quality of Life affected

- 41% of all academic problems stem from alcohol abuse.
- 28% of students who drop out of school may do so because of alcohol abuse.
- 70% of violent behavior (fights, rapes) on campuses results from alcohol abuse.
- 59% of fatal falls are related to alcohol use.
- 50% of traffic fatalities are alcohol related.
- 70% of attempted suicides are alcohol related. Alcohol induced depression: This is a vicious circle that can be difficult to break. The toxic effects of alcohol can manipulate your brain's neuro-transmitters, which are responsible for mood and judgement. This can plunge you into deeper depression and bring about thoughts of suicide. It can also create a continuous cycle of drinking and depression; therefore the more you drink, the more depressed you become, hence you continue to drink and the circle continues.
- Relationships with family members, roommates, and significant others are compromised by alcohol abuse and alcohol induced depression.

About Alcohol

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant that slows down the body and mind. It acts like an anesthetic, dulling areas of the brain that enable people to make sensible decisions. It causes many physical, emotional and health problems. Physically, alcohol can affect coordination, reflexes and interfere with growth. Emotionally, alcohol can interfere with school performance, add stress to your life, and lower your self-esteem. In severe cases, alcohol leads to health problems which can result in death.

Definition of a drink:

A drink contains a half-ounce of alcohol – the amount you'd find in a 12-ounce can of beer, a 4-ounce glass of wine, or a 1-ounce shot of 100- proof distilled spirits such as whiskey or vodka. On average, it takes a person about one hour to metabolize this amount of alcohol.

Where the Alcohol ends up:

When you consume alcohol, 20 % is absorbed into the bloodstream through the stomach, but 80 percent is absorbed through the small intestine where it enters the bloodstream. Once in the blood, the alcohol travels to the heart, brain, liver and other vital organs within minutes. The liver removes alcohol from the bloodstream at about a half-ounce per hour. When you consume alcohol at a faster rate than your body can eliminate it, intoxication occurs.

Measuring Blood Alcohol Content (BAC)

The Blood Alcohol Content test is the standard way of measuring how much alcohol is in the bloodstream. For example, a BAC of .10

means that one-tenth of 1% of your total blood contents is alcohol. While a BAC of .05 and below may give you a slight buzz, a BAC of .50 and higher could cause death.

Body parts affected

When the alcohol level in your blood increases at a rapid rate over a short period of time, there are dangerous consequences including: dizziness, vomiting, impaired mental capabilities, hangover, chemical dependency, alcohol poisoning, respiratory failure, and eventually coma and death.

Factors effecting BAC

Blood Alcohol Content depends on body size, the rate at which the alcohol is consumed and the amount consumed at one time.

Make the tough choices

Think for yourself.

Be strong and **don't give in** to "peer pressure".

Get involved in activities that don't include alcohol.

Understand that you can have fun without alcohol.

Learn from your mistakes and **forgive yourself**.

Learn from other people's mistakes and **forgive them**.

Be an example for others.

Be your own best friend.

University Efforts to Address Alcohol Issues

The UW-Madison has received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Foundation to help address alcohol issues and unsafe drinking behavior in the university community. The Dean of Students Office, Residence Life and University Health Service and the UW Police Department are among the groups in the community which have joined together in an effort to combat the negative effects of alcohol abuse and unsafe drinking. The UW strives to provide alternatives to drinking with sponsored activities.

Liquor Law Enforcement

During the past 3 years the UW Police have issued more than 2300 liquor law violation citations. These citations were for underage drinking or possession of alcohol, underage procuring or attempting to procure alcohol beverages, false ID violations and furnishing alcoholic beverages to underage persons. In addition, persons found to be incapacitated by alcohol (unable to care for themselves due to excessive consumption) are taken to the Dane County Detoxification Center by the UW Police. There they are placed in protective custody until the effects of alcohol have diminished.

We have also been active in enforcement of Wisconsin's Drunk Driving laws averaging over 100 drunk driving arrests each year. Drunk driving is responsible for approximately 40% of traffic deaths in Wisconsin.

Explanations of Laws and Penalties

Underage Consumption or Possession:

It is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to possess or consume any alcoholic beverage (liquor, fermented malt beverage, etc.).

Penalties:

Judges can assess fines and/or driver's license suspension or assignment to a work program, dependent on the number of prior offenses and age of the violator.

Procuring or Attempting to Procure Alcohol:

It is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to procure or attempt to procure any alcohol beverage. This can include ordering a drink at a bar or attempting to purchase beer at a liquor or convenience store or any other location that sells alcoholic beverages.

Penalties:

Judges can assess fines that start at \$250 and/or driver's license suspension or assignment to a work program.

Possession of False Identification

Possession of false identification or identification which falsely represents the bearer to be of legal drinking age is illegal. Use of the ID is also illegal, and mere possession is a violation.

Penalties:

Judges can assess fines between \$100 and \$1,250 and/or driver's license suspension or assignment to a work program.

Procuring for Underage person

Supplying alcoholic beverages to an underage person.

Penalties:

Judges can assess fines between \$100 and \$10,000 or up to 9 months in jail.

Operating While Under the Influence (Drunk Driving)

This includes operating under the influence of alcohol or intoxicants or other drugs or narcotics.

Penalties:

Drunk Driving, 1st Offense:

Fined up to \$2000.00. An administrative suspension may also be assessed at the time of arrest and your license confiscated (even out-of-state licenses). Judges can assess a six to nine month license suspension. A refusal to submit to a chemical test will result in a license revocation.

Absolute Sobriety:

No person under the age of 21 may operate a motor vehicle with any trace of alcohol in their system.

Penalties:

Mandatory 90 day license suspension, and a fine up to \$100.00.

This brochure was developed to help you make smart decisions about your use of alcohol.

The UW Police Department would like to thank the following agencies for their assistance in the development of this brochure:

*Core Institute on Alcohol and Other Drug Studies at Southern Illinois University
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Mothers' Against Drunk Drivers (MAAD)
North Dakota Division of Alcohol and Drugs.
The Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Council of Nebraska.
The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)*

If you would like more information about alternatives to drinking on campus, check the RWJ project website at:

www.uhs.wisc.edu/rwj/

Or you may call them at 265-5231.



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Photo: Jeff Miller, UW News and Public Affairs

Alcohol and You



A Guide to Tough Choices

University Police Department
Striving for Excellence
Serving with Pride
Susan Riseling, Chief