

Chapel Hill Police Department
Teen Party Response
Effective 4-8-2005

Policy: Officers responding to calls involving gatherings where underage drinking of alcohol is occurring will respond in a manner that protects the physical safety of participants, provides for the involvement of parents or guardians, and ensures the enforcement of relevant laws.

I. Responding to the Scene

A. Supervisors should ensure that the number of officers responding to the scene is sufficient to manage the number of participants reported at the event.

B. Officers arriving at the scene should attempt to prevent anyone who is impaired or who is otherwise reasonably suspected of being in violation of criminal and/or motor vehicle laws from driving away from the scene. Of particular importance are those drivers who have consumed alcohol and who appear to be underage.

C. Officers should attempt to identify and detain anyone observed violating a law, with particular attention given to those persons who appear to be underage and who are in possession of alcohol. Caution should be exercised in detaining persons in the area of the event who do not appear to have been active participants in the violation of law.

D. If possible, telephone contact with parents of those under the age of eighteen should be made by the on-scene officers while the teenagers are still at the scene of the event. If immediate notification is not possible, the parental contact information should be forwarded in the police report to the Crisis Unit for notification at a later time.

E. No person under the age of eighteen who has consumed alcohol should be allowed to leave the event (or remain at the event) unless accompanied by a responsible adult (over twenty-one years of age). Officers should attempt to ensure that the adult accepting responsibility for the teenager is authorized to do so by the teenager's parent or guardian. If a responsible, sober adult cannot be located to assume responsibility for a teenager under the age of eighteen who has consumed alcohol, the teenager should be transported to the Police Department until an adult can be contacted.

F. Officers are encouraged to cite participants observed in violation of alcohol statutes and other criminal laws. Citations or arrests will be the only acceptable course of action for adults whom officers have probable cause to believe have hosted the event, provided alcohol to underage persons, or who otherwise facilitated other alcohol-related criminal activities.

G. The police report filed by the officer will include all pertinent information regarding participants, hosts, adults present, parents contacted, conditions observed at the event, etc.

II. Follow-up

A. On the first business day following an event, a Crisis Counselor will contact any parent or guardian who was not located at the time of the police response.

B. The department's Alcohol Law Enforcement Liaison will investigate any case involving parties at which large numbers of underage alcohol violations occurred if sufficient evidence exists to support potential criminal charges against event hosts and/or providers of alcohol.