

**DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL**

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## **ABC, CHP and Stockton Police Run Decoy Operation to Prevent Underage Drinking**

### *10 Clerks are Cited for Selling Alcohol to Minors*

**(Stockton, San Joaquin County)** – Investigators of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) and Officers from the California Highway Patrol and Stockton Police Department have cited 10 clerks for selling alcohol to minors during an undercover law enforcement operation on Thursday night, December 28, 2006. The actions were the result of a compliance check operation in which minors under the direct supervision of the ABC investigators attempted to purchase alcohol from 34 retail licensees in Stockton, French Camp and Lathrop. 10 clerks sold alcohol to the minors, which is illegal.

Those who sold alcohol to the minors face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC may take administrative action against the businesses where alcohol was sold to minors. Disciplinary action against a business can result in a fine, suspension or revocation of the license.

ABC organized the decoy operation with help from the California Highway Patrol and the Stockton Police Department in order to reduce sales of alcohol to persons under the age of 21 and try to reduce alcohol-related crashes.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Young people under the age of 21 have a higher rate of drunken driving fatalities than the general adult population.

Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10 percent or even below. The latest violation rate state-wide is below 20 percent. In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. Funding was also provided through the CHP DUI Corridor Grant .