

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

3927 Lennane Drive, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95834
(916) 419-2500

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Leslie Pond
(805) 541-7140

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ABC Cites Four Clerks for Selling Alcohol to Minors *Decoy Operation Conducted in Lompoc*

(Lompoc) - Investigators from the California Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) have cited four clerks for selling alcohol to minors on July 25, 2011. The actions were the result of a minor decoy operation in which minors under the direct supervision of department investigators, attempted to purchase alcohol from eleven retail licensees in the city of Lompoc.

The clerks who sold to the minor face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC will take administrative action against the alcoholic beverage license of the business. That may include a fine, a suspension of the license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Statistics have shown that 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.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that licensees are complying with the law.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.