



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OC Sheriff Public Affairs 714-904-7042
PIO@OCSheriff.gov

Orange County Sheriff's Department and ABC Cites Clerks for Selling Alcohol to Minors

SANTA ANA, Calif. (Jun. 27, 2026) – Orange County Sheriff's Department along with agents of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) have cited one clerk for selling alcohol to minors on March 26, 2026. The actions were the result of a [Minor Decoy](#) operation in which minors under the direct supervision of department agents, attempted to purchase alcohol from 13 retail licensees in Unincorporated North Orange County.

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

“Conducting these operations allow us to help reduce underage drinking and increase public safety,” said Sheriff-Coroner Don Barnes.

“Licensees should always check identification before selling alcohol,” said ABC Director Paul Tupy. “Our roadways and communities see improved safety when we prevent access to people not old enough to legally purchase alcohol.”

Statistics have shown that young people under the age of 21 have a much higher risk of being involved in a crash than older drivers. [About 25 percent of fatal crashes involve underage drinking](#) according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980s. 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 to below 10 percent in some cities. In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of minor decoys is a valid legal tool of law enforcement to make sure that licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from ABC through the department's [Alcohol Policing Partnership \(APP\)](#) program.



ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

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About the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control

The mission of the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control is to provide the highest level of service and public safety to the people of the State through licensing, education, and enforcement.