



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Tennessee Alcoholic Beverage Commission announces upcoming compliance checks to deter underage sales of alcohol.

NASHVILLE, TN- In an effort to increase compliance rates at Tennessee businesses selling alcohol, the Tennessee Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) announced upcoming underage compliance checks across Tennessee to prevent illegal sales of alcohol to minors. “Our agents have conducted underage compliance checks over the past couple of months, and quite frankly the compliance rate has been dismal, with about half of those checked in May selling to minors,” said TABC Deputy Chief Brent Clayton. Since COVID-19 disrupted normal alcohol sales, the TABC conducted curbside and to-go order compliance checks at liquor-by-the-drink establishments that have been temporarily allowed to serve alcohol for off-premises consumption during the pandemic. The TABC also investigated sales of alcohol for delivery by bars and restaurants but found only a small percentage to be offering delivery of alcohol. Only 5 out of 150 establishments surveyed offered this option. Because of a decrease in available TABC permitted alcohol servers and significant marketplace disruptions in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, those establishments that sold to a minor were only issued warning citations in the month of May.

“In addition to the low compliance rate, we have received numerous complaints from the public regarding the sale of alcohol to minors. Going forward, we will issue regulatory citations, including a monetary fine, as Tennessee law prescribes to those who sell to a minor. Furthermore, the server or clerk will be issued a misdemeanor criminal citation and regulatory citation that could possibly lead to the revocation of their server permit,” said TABC Chief Law Enforcement Officer Bond Tubbs.

Any establishment that has received a warning or regulatory citation can expect to be rechecked within 90 days. In addition to bars and restaurants, the TABC will also check compliance at package stores and food stores licensed through the TABC. These compliance checks are conducted year-round across the state and are funded in part by a grant from the Tennessee Highway Safety Office.

“Our hope, as always, is that we have 100% compliance from our licensees. We see an increase in underage consumption throughout the summer months, and we want to do everything we can to discourage it,” said TABC Executive Director Russell Thomas.

The TABC has checked 177 establishments since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. 69 of those 177 establishments sold alcohol to a minor for a compliance rate of only 69%.