

Why not drink before I'm 21?

Underage drinking is illegal. In Illinois, it is illegal for a person under age 21 to buy, possess, or drink alcoholic beverages. Also, a person under age 21 who drives with ANY amount of alcohol in his/her system may lose his/her driving privileges. This type of suspension may affect future insurance rates and result in charges such as criminal misdemeanor, which may affect future education and employment.

Drinking makes you less mature. You are striving to become more mature in your behavior. Alcohol shifts you into reverse. When you put your brain to sleep with alcohol, you are less apt to try to cope and are less able to cope.

Alcohol may damage your hypothalamus.

The hypothalamus is the part of your brain that controls your "autonomic nervous system." It regulates heartbeat, breathing and other bodily functions. If you drink before that part of your brain is mature, you may permanently damage it. If this happens, you will never reach your full potential. It also may make it easier for you to become addicted to alcohol.

Alcohol takes away your natural inhibitions.

Alcohol removes more of your control, so you do silly things that you may regret later — like saying the wrong thing, passing on a hill or a curve, or taking more alcohol or other drugs.

You could develop a serious alcohol problem.

The younger a person is when he/she starts drinking, the quicker and easier he/she may become a problem drinker. If there is alcoholism in your family, the chances are even greater.

You have an influence on others.

By not drinking or using other drugs, you can be a good role model for your peers and for young children.

ALCOHOL/DRUG EDUCATION & AWARENESS PROGRAM

USE
&
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STUDY GUIDE

JESSE  **WHITE**
SECRETARY OF STATE

Obtaining a Restricted Driving Permit

As a condition of the issuance of a Restricted Driving Permit (RDP) for a driver's license suspension imposed under Section 11-501.8 of the Illinois Vehicle Code, you must complete the Secretary of State Alcohol/Drug Education & Awareness Program, which consists of a review of this study guide and successful completion of a questionnaire administered by a Secretary of State hearing officer.

Once a petitioner becomes eligible (see below), he/she may apply for an RDP to be used during the remainder of the suspension for employment, medical or educational purposes. An "undue hardship" must exist, such as extreme difficulty getting to and from work, school or regularly scheduled medical visits. It also applies to an inability to fulfill a requirement for on-the-job driving. There must be no reasonable alternative means of transportation available to the petitioner. An undue hardship does not exist simply because the petitioner's driving privileges are suspended.

For a list of facilities, hours and available hearing officers, visit www.cyberdriveillinois.com. Please call the location to ensure that a hearing officer is available. For more information regarding the informal hearing process, please contact an informal hearing officer.

RDP Eligibility

Eligibility for an RDP is determined by the length of your suspension.

1. If your license was suspended for three or six months, you may apply for an RDP 15 days prior to the beginning date of the suspension.
2. If your license was suspended for 24 months, you may apply for an RDP 45 days prior to the end of the first 12 months of the suspension.
3. If your license was suspended for 12 months, you are not eligible to apply for an RDP during the suspension.

Questionnaire

When you appear for a hearing, you must complete a questionnaire based on the information in this study guide and achieve a score of 75 percent or more before you are granted a hearing. If you score below 75 percent, you must wait at least one day to try again. If you are under age 18 and unmarried, parent/legal guardian consent is required prior to your hearing.

Documentation

At the time of your hearing, you must submit the following documentation:

1. Sworn Report completed by the law enforcement officer at the time of your arrest.

2. If your blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) from a chemical test taken when you were arrested was .04 or more, you must submit one of the following applicable documents:
 - Investigative Alcohol and Drug Evaluation (BAC of .04-.079)
 - Alcohol and Drug Evaluation Uniform Report (BAC of .08 or higher)

Only original documents that bear your original signature and/or that of the author of the document, as applicable, are accepted. If you lose an original document, you may be able to obtain an original duplicate from your service provider. For more information, please see an informal hearing officer.

Rehabilitation

You also must complete any recommended and/or required rehabilitative activity pertaining to your evaluation's classification of your use/abuse of alcohol/drugs, or provide a written waiver, prior to a hearing.

Informal Hearing

When you have met the eligibility requirements for an RDP, are prepared to complete the questionnaire, and have obtained all required documentation, you may visit a Driver Services facility to request an informal hearing.

Review of the Laws

“Use It & Lose It” — Zero Tolerance

The “Use It & Lose It” law in Illinois established that any driver under age 21 caught with any trace of alcohol in his/her system will lose his/her driving privileges and may be charged with driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (DUI) if he/she has a blood-alcohol concentration of .08 or more or other indications of impaired driving.

Following issuance of a uniform traffic citation, Illinois law allows a police officer to require a breath test from a driver under age 21 if the officer has probable cause to believe that the driver has been drinking. If the driver refuses the test or the test reveals any measurable alcohol level, the driver is subject to sanctions including the loss of his/her driver’s license.

A person whose driving privileges have been suspended under Section 11-501.8 of the Illinois Vehicle Code is not eligible for restoration of full driving privileges until the expiration of:

- Six months from the effective date of the suspension for refusal or failure to complete a test(s) to determine alcohol concentration.
- Three months from the effective date of the suspension for a chemical test that disclosed an alcohol concentration of more than 0.00.
- Two years from the effective date of the suspension for a person previously suspended under Section 11-501.8 who refuses or fails to complete a test(s) to determine alcohol concentration.
- One year from the effective date of the suspension imposed for a person who has been previously suspended under Section 11-501.8 following submission to a chemical test(s) that disclosed an alcohol concentration of more than 0.00.

Illegal Possession/Transportation

It is illegal in every state for persons under age 21 to purchase or possess alcoholic beverages. It also is illegal to transport alcoholic beverages in the passenger area of a vehicle unless the beverages are in their original sealed containers. No matter whom the alcohol belongs to, the driver of the vehicle can be charged with illegal transportation and any passenger can be charged with illegal possession. The driver of the vehicle will receive a 12-month driver’s license suspension for a first offense. A second offense will result in revocation of your driving privileges and vehicle registration.

Parental Responsibility

It is a Class A misdemeanor, with a possible fine of \$1,000 and/or up to 364 days in jail, to knowingly allow individuals to gather at a residence when the individuals are under age 21 and drinking.

Parental Consent/Withdrawal of Consent

Drivers ages 16 and 17 must have parent/legal guardian consent in order to obtain a driver’s license. A parent/legal guardian may revoke consent for the minor to hold a driver’s license at any time, for any reason, until the driver turns 18 by contacting the Secretary of State’s office. Driving privileges will not be reinstated until the parent/legal guardian who withdrew consent once again provides consent or until the driver turns 18, whichever occurs first.

Nighttime Driving Restrictions

State law establishes the following nighttime driving restrictions for drivers under age 18:
Sun.-Thurs., 10 p.m.-6 a.m.; Fri.-Sat., 11 p.m.-6 a.m. (local curfews may differ).

Alcohol Facts

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. It is the mood-altering ingredient in wine, beer and distilled liquor. Because it contains calories, it is considered a food, but the calories in no way contribute to good nutrition. A 12-ounce bottle of beer contains approximately the same amount of alcohol as 5 ounces of wine, or 1 1/2 ounces of 80-proof liquor. Alcohol is absorbed in the blood stream and transmitted to all parts of the body.

Several factors influence the effects of alcohol, including the amount of alcohol consumed, the rate at which it is consumed, the presence of food in the stomach, and the individual’s weight, mood and previous experience with the drug.

- With moderate drinking a person may experience dizziness, dulling of senses and impairment of coordination, reflexes, memory and judgment.
- Taken in larger quantities, alcohol may produce staggering, slurred speech, double vision, dulling of senses, sudden mood changes and unconsciousness.
- Taken in much larger quantities over a short period of time, death may occur due to depression of the parts of the brain that control breathing and heart rate. It also may cause damage to the liver, heart and pancreas.
- Excessive alcohol use may lead to malnutrition, stomach irritation, lowered resistance to disease and brain or nervous system damage.

According to the American Medical Society, “Alcoholism is a chronic, progressive and potentially fatal disease. It is characterized by tolerance and physical dependency or organ changes, or both — all direct or indirect consequences of the alcohol ingested.” Increased tolerance to alcohol may lead to physical dependence. At that point, alcohol becomes a part of a person’s normal function. Physical dependence is characterized by the presence of withdrawal symptoms when use is discontinued suddenly.

Alcohol is an addictive drug. When taken in sufficient quantities, the body becomes adapted or accustomed to its presence. Drinking as much as a quart of liquor daily for one week can create a state of dependence. After dependence has been established, if drinking is stopped, there will be withdrawal symptoms.

One way to end the withdrawal is to take more of the addictive drug/alcohol. Over a period of time, it is necessary to increase the amount of the drug in order to ward off withdrawal.

Because alcohol is a depressant, symptoms are often those of an agitated state. Persons withdrawing from the use of alcohol are jumpy, edgy, irritable, hyped up. These symptoms are the exact opposite of alcohol’s depressant qualities.

“Use It & Lose It” and DUI Statistics

- Alcohol is a factor in at least 42 percent of all fatal crashes.
- Someone is killed in an alcohol-related crash every 45 minutes.
- Nationally in 2008, an estimated 13,846 people lost their lives in alcohol-related crashes.
- Nationally, 31 percent of drivers ages 15-20 killed in traffic crashes had been drinking.
- Nationally in 2008, a total of 5,864 drivers ages 15-20 were involved in fatal motor vehicle crashes, and 2,739 of them lost their lives. About 228,000 people were injured in those crashes.
- In 2008, 2,187 Illinois drivers under age 21 lost their driving privileges due to “Use It & Lose It” law violations.
- In Illinois in 2008, 80 drivers under age 21 were killed in motor vehicle crashes along with 76 passengers.
- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for people ages 15-20.