

**Southern Pines Police Department**  
**Safety Tips**  
*Drinking & Driving*  
*Underage Consumption*

Help prevent driving under the influence of alcohol. The life you save may be someone you care about, might be your neighbor, or maybe even YOU! We need to remember the simple fact that alcohol is a drug. Alcohol is a depressant and greatly affects ones' ability to operate a motor vehicle or machinery safely. The formula for intoxication is rather easy to comprehend. A person who weighs about 150 pounds and then consumes a 12 ounce bottle of domestic beer, a 6 ounce glass of wine, or a 1 ounce shot of 90 proof whiskey will have a blood alcohol content (BAC) of about .02% if tested within one hour. Remember the limit for Driving While Impaired (DWI) is .08% BAC (.04% if driving a Commercial Motor Vehicle), which is usually 3 standard drinks within an hour. This places the person's blood alcohol content over the DWI limit. Someone with a BAC limit of .05% is 50% more likely to be involved in a car crash. The potential for crashes increases as the level of intoxication increases. Don't let this happen to you or someone you know. Help keep our roads safe, know "when to say when", and drive sober. Use a designated driver and be a friend – don't let others drive if they have been drinking. Be aware of impairment through drugs or medication. Even prescription medication can affect the ability to drive and be safe. Follow all warning labels on medications and do not drive until you are aware of how you will react to the medication. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about the effects of prescription medication. Talk with your family and especially your young drivers about the issue and set a good example.

The North Carolina General Statutes call for extra sanctions against a driver who is under 21 years of age who is found to have a BAC of .01% or higher, which is basically any measurable alcohol in the system. The risks of a crash are high when alcohol is mixed with inexperienced drivers so make sure your young drivers are committed to vehicle safety. Help them learn the ways to be safe and that is by following the laws and not drinking and driving. Parents, take a few minutes to remind your young adult about the dangers of drinking and driving. This includes getting in a vehicle with a driver who has been drinking. Each year, tragedies occur that can be prevented.

Start by setting the tone that no amount of alcohol or illegal drug is safe when operating a vehicle. Establish an expectation that any event, even those at a friend or neighbor's house, be supervised by a competent adult and be alcohol and drug free. Party hosts can be subject to arrest and/or civil liability if alcohol or illegal drugs are served to minors. It is against the law for anyone under 21 years old to possess an alcoholic beverage, and it is a crime to provide an alcoholic beverage to an underage person. The host can be held criminally and civilly liable if underage people are served or if a traffic crash or other incident occurs with an intoxicated person that was served at the party. Don't take the chance. Keep your celebration alcohol free and make sure your guests don't bring any alcoholic beverages to your party. Check with the host of a party to make sure your young adult will be in a safe environment and that they will not be pressured to engage in any activity that they feel is unsafe or improper. Give them guidance about how to deal with social pressures on these and other issues and establish the relationship where they can call you to pick them up at any hour of the day or night. Losing some sleep is a small price to pay for the piece of mind knowing that your son or daughter is in a safe environment or has a way of getting out of an uncomfortable situation.

Together, we can make a difference to set a good example and teach our young adults about positive choices.

**For more information or a presentation on this topic, contact the Community Services Coordinator at (910) 692-2732.**