

Southern Pines Police Department
Safety Tips
Responsible Party Hosting

Whether it be a party to celebrate a holiday, commemorate a milestone like a graduation, birthday, new job or retirement, or just to enjoy fun and fellowship with friends, remember to make wise choices when it comes to planning your own party or attending one hosted elsewhere. If you will be inviting people into your home and will be serving alcoholic beverages, remember that you have the responsibility to make sure anyone served is at least 21 years of age and that no one drinks so much that they become impaired. Some would dismiss underage drinking as "youthful indiscretion" or a rite of passage from adolescence into adulthood. Some even justify allowing underage consumption by remembering the legal age when they were young as being lower or by saying "They are going to drink anyway so I would rather have them drinking here". While that thought process may allow a host to rationalize irresponsible behavior, it will not prevent a tragedy or serious consequence of this illegal behavior. The host of a party can be held civilly and criminally responsible if underage people are served or their actions result in a DWI related crash.

Remember that the legal blood alcohol level to be considered "intoxicated" in North Carolina is .08%, and is even lower if operating a commercial motor vehicle. Research shows that motor-skills ability, including driving a motor vehicle, can be impaired at a much lower level of consumption. Make sure designated drivers are available and that no one leaves your party if they are intoxicated, impaired or otherwise not able to safely drive home. Offer non-alcoholic beverages and a variety of food. Remember that nothing reduces your blood alcohol level except the passing of time. You can't "sober up" by drinking coffee or other stimulating beverages. Also, make sure if someone has been drinking too much, that they are in the care of a responsible adult who can look after them and summon medical attention if needed. Attending a party? Follow this advice yourself. Don't drink to the point of impairment or intoxication, don't drive if you have been drinking and don't get in a vehicle with a driver who has. Alcohol related crashes are an all-too-common tragedy in our community. But the good news is that they can be prevented. Make the choice to be safe and keep your friends and relatives safe as well. You'll enjoy the party even more and quite possibly prevent a needless tragedy from occurring.

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