



# 21 Matters™ Underage Sales Prevention

**21 Matters™** provides training and support materials to help alcohol licensees be responsible retailers who consistently check IDs for proof-of-age and refuse alcohol sales to minors. To date, the RRForum has employed the **21 Matters™** model with over 3,000 retailers in 120 communities across the nation.

## How Does the Program Work?

Every quarter, licensees that sell or serve alcohol beverages receive feedback on whether their staff asked for ID from a customer who might be younger than 21—actually, a young, legal-age Mystery Shopper. The Mystery Shopper presents a **Green Card** for proper ID checks or a **Red Card** for a failure to check ID.

**All Mystery Shop results for individual establishments are kept strictly confidential.**

In addition, participating licensees:

- Receive information on recommended best practices for their type of establishment (off-premise or on-premise).
- Receive assistance in developing a written Alcohol Sales Policy for staff to follow.
- Receive communication tools to promote staff commitment to responsible retailing and signage that announces the retailer's participation in the RRF and its commitment to checking IDs.

**Mystery Shopper Report**

In your recent Mystery Shopper inspection, staff didn't ask for an ID:

The details

- Store: Liquor Store
- Date and time: February 9<sup>th</sup>, at 10 pm.
- Name (or description) of the employee: Mr. Smith
- Result: **You failed to check ID!**

**Mystery Shopper Report**

In your recent Mystery Shopper inspection, staff correctly checked IDs:

The details

- Store: Liquor Store
- Date and time: February 9<sup>th</sup>, at 10 pm.
- Name (or description) of the employee: Mr. Smith
- Result: **You passed! Congratulations!**

**RRForum**  
Responsible Retailing

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**A Self-Assessment Tool  
For Alcohol Beverage Retailers**

Licensees that consistently check IDs and refuse purchase attempts by minors achieve their high compliance through an ongoing system of "Responsible Retailing". Responsible Retailing is an umbrella term for the many hiring and training practices, point-of-sale protocols, employee policies, supervisory procedures, and communications directed to customers, that together combine to prevent the sale of alcohol to minors, to intoxicated customers, or to individuals who then furnish alcohol to minors ("3<sup>rd</sup> party" sales).

Use this survey tool to assess the current practices of your establishment in comparison to practices identified by the national chains and their associations, regulators, training organizations and mystery shop vendors who participate in RRForum's Retailer Work Group.

**Part A: Hiring** (Check each of the following that applies)

**As Part of the Hiring Process: Scope and Content of Training**

	Yes	No
• Do you discuss with job applicants the importance of checking IDs and complying with laws relating to underage sales?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Do you ask all job applicants about past sales to minors violations and weigh past violations in hiring decisions?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Do you ask the applicant to demonstrate basic math and reading skills as part of the hiring process?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Do you conduct background checks of prospective employees?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Part B: Training and Re-training**

**As Part of the Hiring Process: Scope and Content of Training**

	Yes	No
• Does each employee go through a training program in selling alcohol and other age-restricted products?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>If Yes</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Does the new employee go through this training program before he or she is permitted to sell alcohol products?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Do you have a written alcohol sales policy that is handed to each new employee and/or is posted prominently for all employees to read?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Do you require the employee to sign an acknowledgment that he/she has read and understands all applicable laws and Store policies relating to sales of age-restricted products?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Does the Store provide additional training periodically to ensure that sales personnel maintain the requisite knowledge, skill, and motivation?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Committed to the Responsible Sale of Alcohol  
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### Recommended Practices for Off-Premises Alcohol Retailers

The RRF's Retailer Work Group — consisting of national retail chains, training organizations and mystery shop vendors; state regulators and attorneys general, producers; and researchers — has identified recommended practices to reduce underage sales and service of alcohol by off-premises licensees. Every responsible retailer should adopt these practices. The list is not all-inclusive and retailers may engage in additional practices to reduce illegal underage sales.

#### 1 Create and maintain a written sales policy

Establishments should have a **written policy** identifying steps that staff must take for every transaction, including:

- ✓ What perceived age triggers an ID check?
- ✓ What are acceptable forms of ID and when is a 2<sup>nd</sup> form of ID required?
- ✓ What should be done if an ID appears to be fake or if a 3<sup>rd</sup> party sale (such as a "shoulder-tap") is suspected?
- ✓ When and how should a sale be refused?
- ✓ What record keeping and supervisor notification are required when problems occur?
- ✓ What consequences will be imposed when staff fail to check IDs?

**Important Note:** The written policy should include state and local laws for all employees to read and understand.

#### 2 Train staff and management on the alcohol sales policy

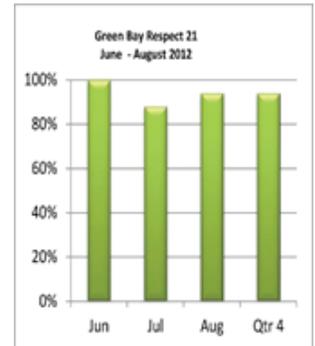
All staff should be fully trained before being permitted to sell alcohol. Training should include:

- ✓ Information on the risks of underage use of alcohol products.
- ✓ Pertinent local and state laws.
- ✓ Every aspect of the store policies identified in Practice #1, above.
- ✓ Role-playing on how to request an ID and deny a sale in a non-confrontational manner.
- ✓ Local laws may set additional specific training requirements.

## Community Reports

RRForum prepares quarterly reports that summarize the Mystery Shopper results for the entire community. (The reports do not give the results for individual licensees.) These reports are shared with local law enforcement, licensing commissions, trade associations, elected officials and other community leaders as appropriate.

### Mystery Shop Results



## How 21 Matters™ Can Help Your Business

21 Matters™ has been proven to increase the number of proof-of-age ID checks that staff do before selling or serving alcohol. Retailers that participate in the RRF know that their establishment is:

- Better prepared to pass law enforcement compliance checks.
- Less likely to be fined, or to suffer a license suspension or revocation.
- Less likely to face legal liability for injuries or deaths associated with alcohol sales to minors.

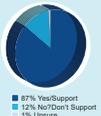
Licensees appreciate being seen - by law enforcement officials, regulators, customers, and the larger community - as responsible retailers that promote public safety.

## How 21 Matters™ Can Help Your Community

21 Matters™ works with local retailers and public stakeholders to develop community-wide practices, such as steps that licensees can take when they identify fake IDs or 3rd-party sales (when an adult purchases for a minor), when a customer may be impaired and needs a safe ride home, and when an impaired customer refuses that assistance and gets behind the wheel.

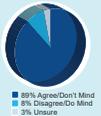
### How do customers feel about ID checks?

QUESTION: Do Americans support the age 21 legal drinking age?



You might think no...but the answer is: **YES!**  
A scientific survey\* asked Americans for their opinion. The survey asked: Do you support the current law that makes it illegal to buy alcohol if you are under age 21? 87% of Americans say YES, they support the age 21 drinking age.

QUESTION: Do Americans mind waiting in line at the checkout counter while clerks check customers' IDs?



You might think yes...but the answer is: **NO!**  
The survey asked: Tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statement: I do not mind waiting in line at the checkout counter for the additional time it takes clerks to check IDs. 89% of Americans AGREE, they do not mind waiting in line while clerks check customer IDs.

QUESTION: What do the survey results mean for you?

1. Ask for an ID before selling alcohol to a customer who appears to be age 30 or younger.
2. Check the ID to make sure it is real and belongs to the customer.
3. Refuse to sell alcohol to a customer with no valid ID.

Do your job well - ask for and check IDs - and your customers will appreciate it!

This report was prepared for the RR Forum by MillerCoors with assistance from researchers at Brandeis University. Survey conducted by The National Group, April 19-20, 2010 with registered U.S. voters, age 21 years and older. \* The margin of error for the entire survey is +/- 3.1%.