

# Alcohol ads still reaching youth on the radio

September 14 2011

---

Almost 1 out of 11 radio ads for alcoholic beverages in 75 markets across the nation in 2009 failed to comply with the alcohol industry's voluntary standard for the placement of advertising, according to an analysis conducted by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

In 2003, trade groups for beer and distilled spirits committed to placing alcohol ads in media venues only when underage youth comprise less than or equal to 30 percent of the audience, which means 30 percent of the listening audience is 20 years old or younger.

The CAMY analysis found that 9 percent of the noncompliant ads were aired in the 75 markets where nearly half of the audience is [radio](#) listeners 12 and older. Three brands alone—Miller Lite, Bud Light, and Coors Light—placed more than half of these violating ads.

The National Research Council, the Institute of Medicine and 24 state attorneys general have called on the [alcohol industry](#) to beef up its standard and meet a “proportional” 15 percent placement standard, given the fact that the group most at risk for underage drinking—12 to 20 year-olds—is approximately 15 percent of the U.S. population.

“A 9 percent failure rate for an already weak standard means that a significant number of [young people](#) are being overexposed to alcohol advertising on the radio,” said David Jernigan, PhD, lead author of the report, associate professor with the Bloomberg School's Department of Health, Behavior and Society, and CAMY director. “Reducing the

voluntary standard to 15 percent would go a long way to keeping our young people safe and away from the undue influence of alcohol marketing. The influence of radio as a local media venue continues even in this dynamic digital age, as 93 percent of Americans ages 12 and older reported that they owned and/or used an AM/FM radio in 2011.”

For this report, CAMY analyzed radio alcohol advertisements in 75 local markets across the United States in 2009, for which full-year data from a consistent survey methodology were available. These markets represent 46.5 percent of the U.S. population age 12 and above. Other key findings include:

- In 2009, youth ages 12-20 were more likely per capita than adults to hear 32 percent of alcohol advertising placements.
- Distilled spirits were the most common type of alcohol advertisements to overexpose youth audiences in Portable People Meter (PPM) markets. The PPM is a new method of measuring listening, in which survey participants agree to wear a small device that receives a special signal from each radio station. PPM allows for more precise measurement of actual listening because it does not depend on survey participants’ active recall and does not require them to record their listening behavior in a paper diary
- In diary markets, where the PPM™ is not yet in use and where people kept a paper diary of radio listening in 15-minute increments throughout the day, beer and alcopops (flavored malt beverages) advertising was most likely to overexpose youth.
- Fifteen brands garnered 25 percent or more of their exposure to youth in at least 10 percent of markets from advertising not in compliance with the industry’s 30 percent standard.

- In the majority of the 11 markets where Arbitron's Portable People Meters were deployed for all of 2009, girls ages 12 to 20 were more likely than boys of the same age to be exposed to advertising for alcopops, distilled spirits, and wine.

“The perception that young people are only listening to music on their iPods, cell phones and the Internet is naive,” said Jernigan. “Radio is still a source of entertainment for youth and alcohol ads are still finding their way to too many young ears.”

Alcohol use is the leading drug problem among youth in the United States. It is responsible for 4,600 deaths per year among young people under the age of 21. Every day, nearly 5,000 young people under the age of 16 take their first drink, and binge drinking (defined as consuming five or more drinks within 2 hours) accounts for more than 90 percent of the alcohol consumed by young people.

At least 13 longitudinal research studies have found that the more young people are exposed to [alcohol](#) marketing, the more likely they are to start drinking or, if already drinking, to drink more.

Provided by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Citation: Alcohol ads still reaching youth on the radio (2011, September 14) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-09-alcohol-ads-youth-radio.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.