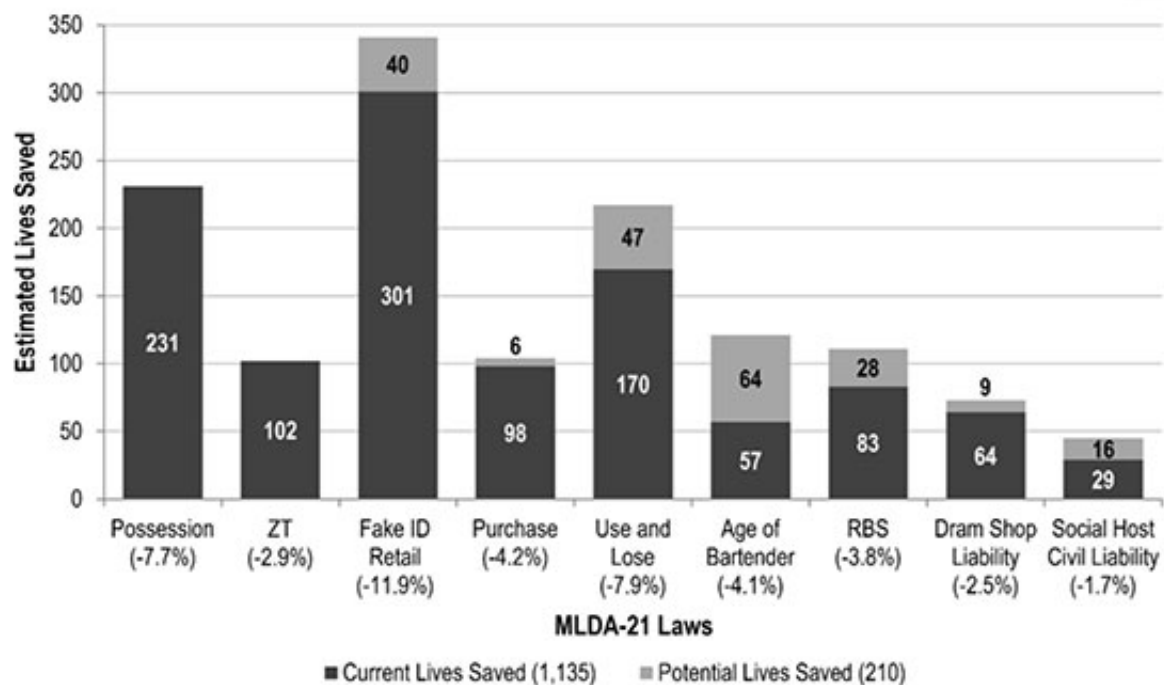


# New research reveals nine laws particularly effective in reducing underage drinking fatalities

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New research reveals that nine laws designed to reduce underage drinking have been instrumental in saving more than 1,100 lives each year in the states that have adopted them, and that an additional 210 lives

could be saved annually if they were adopted in every state.

While all 50 states have adopted a core minimum legal drinking age of 21, a large number of states have adopted expanded [underage drinking](#) laws. Those additional laws were the focus of research done by a team at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) in Calverton, Maryland, and which will be published in the March 2016 issue of the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*.

Of the 20 expanded underage drinking laws that were identified, nine were found to be particularly effective in reducing the number of [fatal crashes](#) involving underage drinking drivers.

The authors examined each law's strengths and weaknesses in terms of coverage, sanctions for violations, exceptions, and ease of enforcement. Results showed wide variability in the strength of each underage drinking law and in the number of states that have adopted them. "We were surprised to find that half of the states have adopted 13 or fewer laws, that only five can be found in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and that just one state, Utah, has adopted all 20," said lead author James Fell, now a principal research scientist at NORC at the University of Chicago. Fell said their particular interest was in the nine laws that made a significant difference in the number of fatal crashes.

The nine minimum [legal drinking age](#) laws associated with significant decreases in fatal crash ratios of underage drinking drivers were: possession of [alcohol](#) (-7.7%), purchase of alcohol (-4.2%), use alcohol and lose your license ( 7.9%), zero tolerance .02 blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for underage drivers (-2.9%), age of bartender ?21 ( 4.1%), state responsible beverage service program (-3.8%), fake identification support provisions for retailers (-11.9%), dram shop liability (-2.5%), and social host civil liability ( 1.7%).

The nine laws are estimated to be currently saving approximately 1,135 lives annually. The researchers estimate that if all [states](#) adopted them, an additional 210 lives could be saved each year.

**Table 1: Minimum Legal Drinking Age 21 (MLDA-21) Law Components and Descriptions**

MLDA-21 Law Components	Description
<b>CORE LAWS THAT APPLY TO YOUTH:</b>	
1. Possession	Illegal for youth under age 21 to possess alcohol.
2. Purchase	Illegal for youth under age 21 to purchase or attempt to purchase alcohol. Possession and purchase were treated together as the laws that met federal standards by 1988.
<b>EXPANDED LAWS THAT APPLY TO YOUTH:</b>	
3. Consumption	Illegal for youth under age 21 to consume alcohol.
4. Internal Possession	Evidence of possession and consumption via a BAC test.
5. Use and Lose	Alcohol citation for youth under age 21 results in drivers' license suspension.

6. Use of Fake Identification	FID minor – Illegal for youth under age 21 to use fake identification to purchase alcohol.
<b>APPLY TO YOUTH DRIVING:</b>	
7. Zero Tolerance	ZT – Illegal for a driver under age 21 to have any alcohol in their system when driving.
8. Graduated Driver Licensing with Night Restrictions	GDL – Youth with intermediate or provisional license prohibited from driving without an adult in the vehicle past a certain hour at night.
<b>APPLY TO PROVIDERS:</b>	
9. Furnishing or Selling	Illegal to furnish or sell alcohol to youth under age 21.
10. Age of On-Premise Servers	Minimum age set for selling/serving alcohol.
11. Age of On-Premise Bartenders	Minimum age set for bartenders.
12. Age of Off-Premise Sellers	Minimum age set for selling/serving alcohol.
13. Keg Registration	Identification number for beer keg and purchaser required.
14. Responsible Beverage Service Training	RBS – Responsible beverage training mandatory or voluntary.
15. Retailer Support Provisions for Fake Identification	FID Retailer – Provisions to assist retailers in avoiding sales to youth under age 21.
16. Social Host Prohibition	SHP – Prohibits social hosting of drinking parties for youth under age 21.
17. Dram Shop Liability	Action against commercial provider of alcohol.
18. Social Host Civil Liability	Action against non-commercial (private) provider of alcohol.
<b>APPLY TO MANUFACTURERS OR SUPPLIERS OF FAKE IDENTIFICATION:</b>	
19. Transfer/Production of Fake Identification	FID Supplier – Prohibits manufacturing and/or supplying fake identification to youth for the purposes of buying alcohol.
<b>APPLY TO STATES CONCERNING CONTROL OF ALCOHOL DISTRIBUTION:</b>	
20. State Control of Alcohol Sales	State Control – A state-run retail distribution system of one or more of the alcohol beverage types.

Provided by University of Chicago

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