

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SDPD and ABC Conduct Minor Decoy Operation Resulting in No Citations

OPERATIONS IN SAN DIEGO DESIGNED TO PREVENT UNDERAGE DRINKING

SAN DIEGO – The San Diego Police Department’s (SDPD) Vice Unit along with the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) conducted a [Minor Decoy](#) operation on April 12, 2026. The operation involved minors, under the direct supervision of department agents, who attempted to purchase alcohol from eight retail licensees in San Diego. All eight clerks practiced responsible alcoholic beverage sales by checking the minor decoy’s identification and refusing to sell to the minor.

If a clerk sold to a minor, they would face a minimum fine of \$250 and between 24 and 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC may take administrative action against the alcoholic beverage license of the business. These actions may include a fine, suspension, or the permanent revocation of the license.

Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980s. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped to below 10 percent in some cities. In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of minor decoys is a valid legal tool of law enforcement to make sure that licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from ABC through the department’s [Alcohol Policing Partnership \(APP\)](#) program.

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About the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control

The mission of the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control is to provide the highest level of service and public safety to the people of the State through licensing, education, and enforcement.