

WEB RESOURCES

PACE, coalition to reduce effects of high-risk drinking:
pace.uhs.wisc.edu

Madison Police, information on parties:
www.ci.madison.wi.us/police/partyinfo.html

Offices of the Dean of Students:
www.wisc.edu/students

SAFEwalk:
www2.fpm.wisc.edu/trans/safe

University Health Services:
www.uhs.wisc.edu

THROWING A HOUSE PARTY

A GUIDE BY
AND FOR
UW-MADISON
STUDENTS

HOW TO INVITE THE POLICE
TO YOUR HOUSE PARTY

- CHARGE A COVER
- SELL SHOTS

• ATTRACT TOO MANY PARTY-GOERS



As students at the UW–Madison, we developed this guide to help you lower the risks associated with house parties.

OUR GOAL

ALCOHOL is a drug that impedes judgment and self-control. The misuse of alcohol causes health problems and is a burden on city resources. Still, the campus community understands that many students choose to drink. We are committed to reducing alcohol-related problems by providing information and promoting awareness about the consequences of high-risk drinking parties.

HOUSE PARTY

WHAT, EXACTLY, IS A HOUSE PARTY?

By “house party” we are referring to a packed house party—not a group of friends gathered together having a couple of drinks, shooting darts, and socializing.

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A HUGE GATHERING OF PEOPLE

A crowded, damp, dark basement of a house; plenty of cheap beer; loud, pulsating music; possibly a cash bar with generic shots; and at the end of the night, everyone having had too much to drink. With lots of stories to tell, they leave behind a mess for the residents of the house to clean up.

As students, we are familiar with the scenarios and risks that house parties present on a college campus. We have not just researched it, we have lived it, and we are speaking from experience when we present this information in an attempt to reduce alcohol-related problems of house parties that can result in fines, property damage, and injuries.



HOUSE PARTY

SO WHY THROW A LARGE HOUSE PARTY?

SOME students throw large house parties for the notoriety. Some do it to take advantage of naive, underage freshmen. Some do it for the money. Many end up with a large party because their small gathering got out of hand.

The safest party is one with a guest list at the door. The hosts of the party know everyone present. As a result, there is no question about how many people will attend. By knowing everyone in their house, the risk of damage, theft, and loss of control is greatly minimized.

Using a list is not usually an option at a typical house party, in which friends tell friends, word is passed around the dorms, and people see a crowd walking off campus and follow them toward the sound of loud music and parties. This situation is much more common and carries many more associated risks.

This booklet addresses these higher-risk house parties, presenting common dangers, as well as proven methods to minimize risks and ensure that everyone can have a fun, safe time.

"I HEARD THERE'S A SIX-KEG PARTY
DOWN ON MIFFLIN!"



PROPERTY DAMAGE
AND THEFT

SEXUAL ASSAULTS

FIGHTS

PARTY BUSTED

PROPERTY DAMAGE AND THEFT

Allowing strangers into your home and letting them walk around unsupervised creates opportunities for items to be broken or stolen. The best way to prevent this, as obvious as it may seem, is to not allow access to valuable items.

- Lock all bedrooms, cupboards, and closets. Be sure that locks are secure enough not to get kicked in or broken.
- Secure cabinets, drawers, and refrigerators (duct tape works well). Clear shelves and bulletin boards. Remove towels, toiletries, and cleaning supplies from the bathroom.
- Cover or protect all items that can be tampered with. This includes valves on the furnace, water heaters, radiators, and fuse boxes (which drunk folks love to play with). Duct tape and cardboard work well to cover most, but make sure that the pilot light won't ignite any coverings.

- **DO NOT ALLOW SMOKING** inside the house. This will drastically reduce the chance of a fire—especially those 90-year-old houses you are partying in. It will also reduce odors inside. Most smokers will be happy to step outside to have a smoke and cool off.
- It is imperative that, as the host, you remain sober and keep an eye on the door and events taking place outside. Check the locks, the barrels/taps, and watch for people breaking or stealing items. It's a good idea to ask friends to help you monitor the party.

REMEMBER: If items come up missing, there's little that can be done. It's unlikely you'll find out who took them. If damage is done to the house, the hosts are liable and will face consequences with the landlord. Soiled carpets, broken doors, scratched cabinets, and a flooded bathroom or basement will almost always result in the loss of the security deposit and/or eviction. Read your lease carefully so you know your responsibilities!



THE RISKS

SEXUAL ASSAULTS

- Guests who have had too much to drink are generally not in a state of mind to obtain or grant consent for sex. If your guests' behavior looks questionable, consider stepping in to make sure both parties are consenting and sober enough to do so. Groping, harassing, or any other unwanted sexual contact is always unacceptable.
- Talk to your guests and their companions as they come and go. Ask them if their friends know they are leaving, and if they know the person/people with whom they are leaving. Watch for people lingering outside the party; your guests will be easy targets of crime if they leave visibly drunk.
- Offer information about late-night campus bus routes (80/81/82) and SAFERide services (262-5000) to your guests as they leave.

FIGHTS

Use your best judgment to diffuse violence. If people are looking to fight, destroy property, or do something that could hurt other people, consider your options:

- Let other guests know to avoid the people looking to fight.
- Consider contacting police before things get out of hand and neighbors call the police for you.
- Get a large group of friends to escort them out of the party and off the property. Watch entrances so they can't return.

Alcohol and other intoxicants severely impede judgment and blur boundaries of acceptable behavior. As the host of a party, you are responsible for making sure that no one fears for his or her safety. You can do this by being aware and responding to activity in your house.

“THEY WERE BOTH TRASHED WHEN THEY LEFT THE PARTY. SHE LOOKED UNCOMFORTABLE, SO I TOLD HIM JUST TO GET HER NUMBER AND CALLED HER A CAB.”



THE RISKS

PARTY GETS BUSTED

Probably the biggest fear of anyone hosting a house party is that the police will show up at their door. Frequently, many laws are broken at house parties, which means that a police visit can result in large fines for the hosts of the party.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS I CAN KEEP THE COPS AWAY?

- Alert neighbors when you are having a party. Giving neighbors a heads-up before the party shows respect and encourages neighbors to approach the hosts with concerns, instead of immediately calling the police.
- Take frequent walks around the outside of the house. You'll find out if the music is too loud, people are too loud, if there is a line to get in (this is a sure signal to police that your party is too big), if people are too drunk to be allowed back in the party, etc.
- Keep all guests in the backyard or back of the house. This will draw less attention to the party and discourage people from wandering around through neighbors' yards.
- Use fans and vents to keep the temperature cooler inside the house. This will help keep people from passing out or getting sick. It will also decrease the need for people to stand outside to cool off, which will lessen the noise outside.

THE MOST COMMON REASONS POLICE COME TO A PARTY

- Noise complaints (neighbors calling police)
- Fights and disturbances
- People gathering outside (hanging in street, driveways, porches)
- Public urination or vomiting (in street, on houses, on cars)
- Destruction of public or private property (vandalism, theft, arson)
- Pulling fire alarms (typically in apartments)



“THE COPS BUSTED OUR PARTY.”



A FINE MESS

WHAT CAN THE COPS DO IF THEY BUST US?

Hosts may be fined by the city for any combination of the following:

- Dispensing Alcohol without a Permit, \$676
- Disorderly Conduct, \$424
- Providing Alcohol to Underage Persons:
 - \$361, first offense
 - Jail, second offense
- Public Urination, \$172
- Open intoxicants, \$298
- Noise Violation, \$172
- Underage Drinking (per underage guest at party):
 - \$172, first offense
 - \$298, second offense

You may be fined by your landlord. Many leases have a no-party clause that can result in fines or even eviction. In many cases, landlords are notified when complaints are made against the tenants.

Your records may become tarnished:

- Drinking-age convictions appear on driving records for five years.
- Your driver's license can be suspended (\$50 to reinstate).
- Your auto insurance rates go way up.
- Your student record may be affected if the dean of students gets involved.
- In some cases, parents may be notified.
- Drinking-and-driving penalties are much more severe than the penalties above.

If you are caught on university property, you might also be subject to campus judicial procedures. The outcomes could involve probation, suspension, or expulsion (depending on the severity of your offense), particularly if you are found responsible for a conduct violation.

THE RISKS

WHAT SHOULD WE DO IF THE POLICE SHOW UP AT OUR PARTY?

- DO NOT run away from the police or lock the door on them. Avoidance will only make the situation worse, so come clean up front.
- DO stop the music and the party and ask everyone to leave calmly. Emphasize to the guests that the hosts are the target of the police, not them—so they should just relax.
- DO find the most sober and coherent host to talk with the officers. Uncontrollable and uncooperative hosts will only aggravate the officers.
- If given a citation, DO go to your court date to address the situation and citation.

DRINK SMART

BY PRACTICING THESE SIMPLE TECHNIQUES, YOU CAN LEARN TO BE MORE IN CONTROL OF YOUR DRINKING AND AVOID GETTING SICK OR HURT

USE YOUR MOUTH

- Slow down your drinking to no more than one drink per hour.
- Sip, don't gulp.
- Alternate between alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages.
- Don't quench your thirst with alcoholic drinks.

USE YOUR STOMACH

- Eat before you drink.
- Choose drinks with a low alcohol content.

USE YOUR HEAD

- Plan how much you will drink beforehand and tell your friends.
- Prepare yourself for potential problems, like pressure to drink more than you can tolerate.
- Get involved in activities that don't involve alcohol.
www.union.wisc.edu/fashionablylate
- Don't drink every day.
- Designate a sober driver.
- Avoid drinking games.

adapted from HabitSmart

how many
cheeseburgers
did you
drink
last
month?

take the
e-CHUG quiz
@www.uhs.wisc.edu

e-CHUG is sponsored by the UW fraternity and sorority community, University Health Services, and PACE

KEEP IT
SAFE
KEEP IT
FUN FOR
EVERYONE

CONCLUSION

House parties happen now, parties happened when our parents were in college, and parties will happen when our children are in college. Parties can be high-risk situations, with many potentially costly consequences associated with hosting one. Students have been injured and have even died at house parties. Much of the responsibility is on the shoulders of the host. This guide is based on perspectives and experiences of college students who have been in these situations and want to keep the environment of a party fun and safe for all involved.

Call 911 for fire and rescue response in an emergency.

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THIS GUIDE?

How can we work together to keep parties from getting out of hand? Please send suggestions to:
pace@news.wisc.edu