Alcohol and the Law

**Consuming alcohol in licensed premises**
It is against the law for someone who is under 18 to consume alcohol in a licensed premise, with the exception of 16 and 17 year-olds, who are allowed to drink beer, wine or cider during a meal with adults (but they may not buy the alcohol themselves).

**No ID no sale**
Even if someone is over 18, shopkeepers and licensed premises can refuse to serve them if they don’t have ID and look younger.

**Buying alcohol for someone else**
Police have the power to charge anyone over 18 who knowingly buys alcohol for someone under 18 (buying by proxy).

**Buying alcohol for yourself**
It is illegal for licensed premises to sell alcohol to someone under 18.
It is illegal to sell alcohol to a person who is drunk.

**Alcohol restriction zones**
It is an arrestable offence to fail to comply with a police officer’s request not to drink alcohol in a designated Alcohol Restricted Area. The police also have the power to take away and dispose of any alcohol and containers in the persons possession.

**Underage drinking in public places**
Police have powers to confiscate alcohol from under 18s drinking in public spaces (e.g. on the street or in parks).

**Drinking and driving**
It’s against the law for an adult to drive with more than 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of their blood (or more than 50mg of alcohol per 100ml in Scotland). If they break the law, they could face a fine of £5,000, six months in prison and having their licence taken away for at least a year. Causing death through drink-driving can result in a maximum prison sentence of 14 years and a two-year driving ban. For more information, visit [think.direct.gov.uk](http://think.direct.gov.uk)