Crime and Alcohol Abuse

- Nationally, alcohol abuse is a factor in 75% of domestic violence incidents involving spouses. (U.S. DOJ, Bureau of Justice Stats., 1998)
- Nationally, alcohol is involved in 43% of victim reported rapes. (Columbia University, 1999)
- Excessive alcohol consumption causes over 100,000 deaths every year in this country. About one-quarter of these deaths were caused by impaired drivers. (*Scientific American*, 1996)

Economic Burden of Alcohol Abuse

In addition to traffic deaths, every year the national economic impact of problems caused by underage alcohol consumption is tremendous:

- Violent crime committed by underage drinkers: $35.9 billion
- Vehicle crashes involving alcohol: $18.2 billion
- Drowning and near drowning of youths under the influence: $532 million
- Alcohol poisoning due to excessive drinking: $340 million
- Burns attributed to alcohol use by youth: $315 million

(National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, 1999 report)

Secondary Effects of Binge Drinking

Binge drinking is defined as 5 or more drinks in a row. In addition to being drunk or impaired, alcohol abuse can cause other effects or consequences. One study found the following secondary effects of binge drinking to non-drinkers on college campuses:

- Insults or humiliating acts
- Serious arguments
- Physical assaults
- Property damage
- Having to care for a drunk student
- Interrupted sleep or studying
- Unwanted sexual advances
- Sexual assault or date rape

(Harvard School of Public Health, 1996 study)

Resources

- For local county alcohol and drug programs, consult your telephone directory

- **California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs Resource Center**
  1-800-879-2772 (9 a.m. - 4 p.m.)
  (916) 445-1942 - TTY • www.adp.ca.gov

- **Center for Substance Abuse Treatment**
  U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
  1-800-662-HELP (4357) • www.samhsa.gov/csat

- **National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse,** at Columbia University
  (212) 841-5200 • www.casacolumbia.org

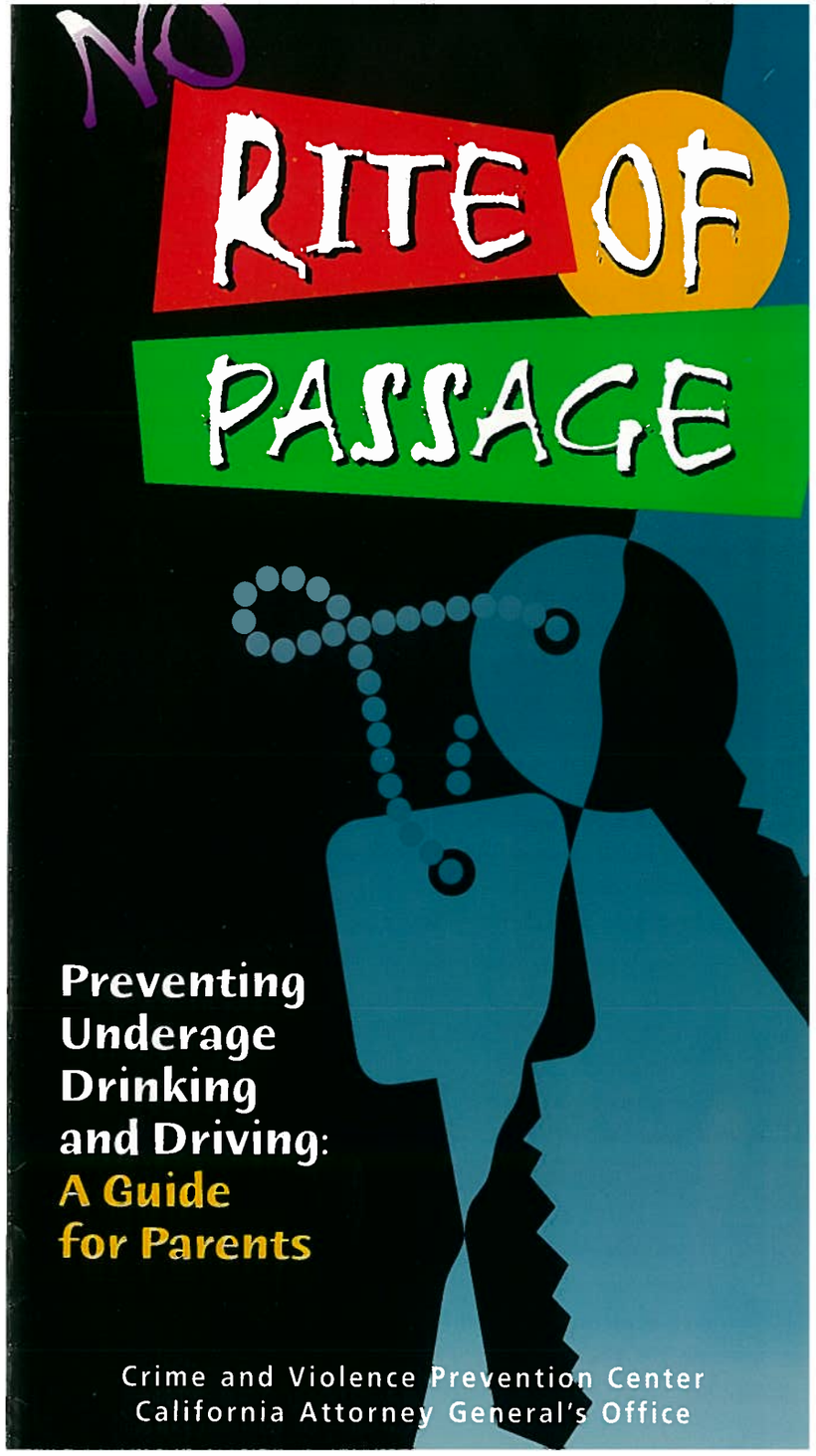
- **National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependance**
  1-800-475-4673 • www.ncadd.org

For information about school-based prevention programs:

- **California Department of Education**
  Healthy Kids Program Office
  (916) 657-2810 • www.cde.ca.gov

For more information on underage drinking and driving and the *Check Yourself ... Never Drink and Drive* campaign, the 1997-98 *California Student Survey* or other crime prevention materials, write to:

California Attorney General's Office
Crime and Violence Prevention Center
P.O. Box 944255
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550
(916) 324-7863
http://caag.state.ca.us/cvpc
http://www.stopdrugs.org



Preventing Underage Drinking and Driving: A Guide for Parents

Crime and Violence Prevention Center
California Attorney General's Office

Alcohol use by teen drivers is an especially deadly mix. More than a third of all motor vehicle-related teen deaths involve alcohol.

Youthquake Ahead
California Office of Traffic Safety, 1997

Everyone in California pays when teens drink and drive. The consequences can be devastating: wasted lives, loss of loved ones, permanent disabling injuries, broken relationships, overwhelming medical bills and other expenses.

California faces a challenge in preventing underage drinking and driving. According to the 1997-98 *California Student Survey* (CSS), the California Department of Justice reports a troubling increase in teen binge drinking and driving while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Adding to the challenge is an anticipated surge in teen population in the next decade.

Almost 40 percent of 11th graders have driven after drinking, according to the 1997-98 CSS. Each year, more than 1,900 underage drinking drivers are involved in collisions, causing injuries or deaths in California. These drivers under the age of 21 are only 5.4% of the state's drivers, but are responsible for 13% of the alcohol-related crashes. (Automobile Club of Southern California, 1999 report).

Even when a collision does not occur, there are still stiff economic consequences. A first-time misdemeanor conviction for driving under the influence can cost the driver approximately $11,000 in fines, legal fees, increased insurance costs and other related expenses over the three years following arrest. (Automobile Club of Southern California, 1998 report.)

The California Office of Traffic Safety predicts that because of an estimated 33 percent surge in the teen population, many more teens will be on the roads in our state this next decade. Yet, teen drivers don't have to be a menace on the road — research consistently finds that *parents* are extremely influential in the decisions that children and teenagers make. *Your* attitudes, values and behavior are critically important in the lives of your children.

Teen drivers are also more likely to be at fault in a collision ..... In California, 16 year olds are at fault 66 percent of the time. This high risk status results from a mix of inexperience and immaturity.

Youthquake Ahead
California Office of Traffic Safety, 1997

Suggestions for how parents can positively influence their children:

If your child is a pre-teen –

- Set a good example.
- Never drive under the influence of alcohol or any other drug.
- Never drink to excess or take illegal drugs.
- Spend quality time with your child.
- Involve your child in family decisions.
- Talk with your child about the negative influence of alcohol and other drugs.

If your child is a teenager –

- Let your teenager know that he or she has your love and support .
- Make an agreement or contract with your teenager that **neither of you** will drive or ride with another driver who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Make sure your children understand that the ***California Zero Tolerance Law*** does not allow any detectable levels of alcohol in their system while operating a vehicle.
- Continue to talk with your teenager about alcohol and other drugs.
- Set consistent and appropriate boundaries and consequences.
- Know your teenager's friends.
- Know how your teenager will get to and from events or parties.
- Discuss overnight arrangements with your teen and the host's parents.
- Never allow alcohol or drugs at gatherings hosted by your teenager.
- Encourage your child to volunteer with organizations such as Friday Night Live, Teenwork or Mothers Against Drunk Driving.
- Encourage your children to be involved in the arts, sports, music or other constructive activities.
- Be a positive example.
- Remind your teenager that the legal drinking age is 21 in all 50 states.