

MINORS AND BARS: THE BASICS

Everyone knows that in California you must be 21 in order to consume alcoholic beverages. However, can someone under the age of 21 sit at a bar? What about in a bar area of a restaurant? The law generally doesn't allow individuals under the age of 21 in bars, but there are exceptions.

THE RULES YOU NEED TO KNOW

- 1 No One Under 21**
Section 25665 of the California Alcoholic Beverage Control statute states that minors are not allowed to enter or remain within a bar. Persons under 21 years of age may not enter and remain in any premises with a green-colored ABC license except on lawful business.
- 2 Bars Must Post Signs**
Bars with a green-colored ABC license are required to post a sign visible from the exterior at each public entrance and another one inside stating that no one under the age of 21 is allowed inside. However, minors may enter and remain in any licensed premises which have a pink-colored ABC license.
- 3 Restaurant Bar Exceptions**
A minor is allowed to enter and remain inside a restaurant that happens to have a bar attached to it, but not sit in the bar area. This means not only at the bar but generally at the bar tables.
- 4 Minors Generally Can't Work in a Bar**
Minors can't work in any establishment whose main business is selling alcoholic beverages for use on the premises. Further, if they are under 18, they cannot work anywhere in which alcoholic beverages are purchased for take-out (a liquor or convenience store, for example) unless they are under the continuous supervision of someone who is at least 21. (B&PC § 25663).
- 5 Patron Must Prove Age**
If the patron can't prove their age, then they can't remain in the bar. (B&PC §§ 25658(a), 25658.4, 25659).

Questions? Ask the CRA Helpline.
www.calrest.org/helpline



FINES FOR BREAKING THE RULES

There are a variety of different fines for breaking the rules. These are the most common:

1. Bar owners wrongfully allowing minors in a public bar with a green license face a penalty of \$1000 and/or 6 months in county jail.
2. The penalty for the minor wrongfully in the bar is a fine of not less than \$200.
3. The penalty for selling alcohol to a minor is \$250 and/or 24-32 hours Community Service.
4. Furnishing alcohol to a minor resulting in great bodily injury or death is a minimum 6 months in jail and/or maximum \$1000 fine as well as civil liability.