



choose
to keep **your**
freedom

Developed by:

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Massachusetts Department
of Elementary and
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Massachusetts Department
of Public Health, Bureau of
Substance Addiction Services
Massachusetts Executive Office
of Public Safety and Security's
Office of Grants and Research

YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED THAT

CHOICES YOU MAKE TODAY MAY

HAVE LIFE-LONG CONSEQUENCES.

Paying attention to laws that may affect you can help you to stay on track with activities you like to do. Making bad decisions can jeopardize your school activities, extracurricular sports, and clubs. In the future, they may affect your military eligibility and service, college admission, and financial aid. Hopefully this information will be helpful, even though it is not legal advice.

Penalties for breaking the law include, but are not limited to:

- Possible imprisonment
- Possible commitment to the Department of Youth Services (DYS)
- Monetary fine
- Loss of license and/or eligibility to get a license
- Permanent juvenile or criminal record

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YOUR RECORD

- A criminal or juvenile record can prevent you from getting a job or joining the military.
- If you are 18 or older and commit a crime, you are considered an adult and you will be subject to adult penalties, including the possibility of going to prison.
- If you are under 18 and commit a crime, you may be committed to DYS.

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Using alcohol or other drugs is a decision that could result in a criminal record. If you are under 21 years old, it is illegal for you to possess or consume alcohol or marijuana. At any age, possession of illegal narcotics is a crime.

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Q If I use someone else's license or other ID to buy alcohol, have I broken a law?

A Yes. It is unlawful to make, use, or carry a fake or altered ID. Penalties can include loss of driver's license or possible commitment to the Department of Youth Services, house of correction, or state prison.

Q What if I attend a party where there is underage drinking, but I don't drink any alcohol?

A You could still be charged with being a minor in possession of alcohol, even if you are not actually drinking or holding alcohol.

Q What if I have a party and underage guests (under the age of 21) bring alcohol?

A It is illegal to serve, provide, or furnish alcohol to underage guests, or to allow them to drink alcohol in your home or on property you control. The penalty for you and your parents is a fine up to \$2,000, imprisonment for up to a year, or both. You and your parents could also be sued. You also may be responsible if a guest is intoxicated or harmed or if anyone from the party leaves and causes harm to another as a result of drinking alcohol at your party.

Q If I drive friends to a party and they put beer in my trunk, what can happen to me?

A It is illegal to transport alcohol if you are under the age of 21. If convicted, your driver's license will be suspended for 90 days. You could be fined and you will have a juvenile or criminal record.

Q What can happen if my friends are drinking in my car?

A You cannot allow people to drink in your car. If you and your friends are under 21 and they are drinking in your car, you are a minor transporting or possessing alcohol. If convicted, your driver's license will be suspended for 90 days. You could be fined and you may have a juvenile or criminal record. Obviously, it is illegal for you to drink alcohol and drive.

Q Is possessing or consuming marijuana legal for people under 21?

A It is still against the law for anyone under the age of 21 to possess or use marijuana for non-medical reasons. (Marijuana for medical purposes requires a medical marijuana prescription). Marijuana affects mental processes and the ability to drive safely, so no one should drive after using marijuana and no one should ride with someone who has been using marijuana. Operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs is a crime.

Q What if my friend asks me to hold an illegal drug, and I give it back to him later?

A Don't accept it! Once you accept it, you are in possession. Don't pass it on! If you pass it on to someone, you have distributed drugs knowingly and intentionally. Possession of illegal drugs is a serious crime with serious penalties.

Q What if I give one of my prescription drugs or an illegal drug to another person?

A You do not have to sell drugs to be guilty of distribution. You can be guilty of distributing drugs merely by giving them to another person. Also, if you are found guilty of distributing on school grounds, you may face a mandatory sentence that includes commitment to DYS as a juvenile and/or to a house of correction or a state prison as an adult.

Q What about being a Good Samaritan? Will I get in trouble with the police for having alcohol or drugs if I seek help because I or a friend is incapacitated from consuming too much alcohol or drugs?

A Call for help if you think you or a friend has had too much alcohol or drugs and needs help. Massachusetts law considers a person under 21 to be a Good Samaritan if that person seeks medical help for someone (including himself or herself) who is incapacitated because of too much alcohol or drugs. As a Good Samaritan, you cannot be charged with the purchase, possession, or consumption of drugs or alcohol if officials only learn of it as a result of your seeking help.

OTHER CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

Q What if I put graffiti on a public building or private property?

A If you put graffiti on anyone else's property, public or private, you have committed the crime of tagging. If convicted, you may face possible imprisonment for up to two years in a house of correction or a fine of at least \$1,500.

Q What if I bully or harass someone because I think they are different from me or my friends?

A Bullying in some circumstances is a hate crime. A hate crime is a criminal act against a person or property where a victim is chosen because of his or her real or perceived race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or gender. There are many penalties for this kind of conduct, including imprisonment and commitment to DYS.

THINK BEFORE YOU SEND!

The internet is a useful and powerful tool. Messages you send and images you post on the internet are not always private, however, even if you intend them to be.

The information you post online or send via email, text, or instant message may end up in the hands of your family, friends, teachers, acquaintances, and complete strangers, as well as potential employers, colleges, police officers, or officials. Even if you delete something you posted or sent, it never really goes away.

Ask yourself, “Would I want this message or image sent to a lot of people?”

Once you hit SEND, you lose control.

Did you know that...

sending threatening or harassing messages by text, email, or social media sites, and/or posting and/or disseminating certain images including sexual, nude, or partially nude images of yourself or someone else (“sexting”).

...could be considered criminal.

You may be charged with a crime such as criminal harassment, threatening to commit a crime, or possession and/or distribution of child pornography. Penalties for these crimes can include imprisonment or commitment to DYS.

For more information about substance misuse, contact:

The Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline

1-800-327-5050

TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-439-2370

HelplineMA.org

For additional copies of this pamphlet and other resources at no charge:

Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse

1-800-952-6637

TTY: Use MassRelay at 711 or 1-800-439-2370

mass.gov/MAClearinghouse

Developed by:

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health,
Bureau of Substance Addiction Services**

mass.gov/dph/bsas

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mass.gov/essexda

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/safety/atod.html>

**Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's Office of Grants
and Research**

mass.gov/ogr

