



# back-bar inspection

*Trends, tips, and useful information . . .*

The “back-bar inspection” portion of our newsletter is designed to provide law enforcement personnel and our stakeholders with up-to-date information on alcohol-related crime trends, enforcement tips, and additional information that may be useful in enhancing ABC investigations. Although this section is specifically written for the purpose of increasing officer awareness and reducing alcohol-related crimes, it will also enlighten all readers as to what is new in terms of our response to irresponsible alcoholic beverage sales, service, and consumption.

As many readers know, the focus of Operation ABC activities are designed to promote the responsible sales, service and consumption of alcoholic beverages and thereby, enhance the overall safety of the communities we serve. As a review for Department personnel, and to provide insight for outside agencies desiring to emulate our success in reducing alcohol-related crime by establishing successful programs, this edition of the back-bar inspection will focus on the Responsible ABC Retailer Program. The program provides education and training to ABC retailers and formally recognizes those businesses who work in partnership with the LAPD to support our goal of reducing alcohol-related crime.

Beginning as a pilot program in 2001, the Responsible ABC Retailer program has shown significant benefits when incorporated into our traditional educational efforts. This program is a blending of classroom instruction, follow-up on-site inspections and an oral agreement between licensees and the LAPD to dispense alcoholic beverages in a responsible manner. It is in direct alignment with the Community Based Policing philosophy and has greatly enhanced the working relationship between the ABC retail community and the LAPD.

Specific guides have been established in order for retailers to participate in the program. By their very nature, these guidelines are designed to form a working partnership between the ABC retail community and local law enforcement. In practice, the guidelines assist the retailer in doing a better job through education and training, and reduce the necessity to initiate enforcement action through increased compliance rates at participating locations. In order to participate in the program the following criteria must be met:

Retailers must have recently attended a Standardized Training for Alcohol Retailers (STAR) presentation conducted by the LAPD. As ABC regulations periodically change and as a refresher, it is recommended that ABC retailers and their employees attend a STAR presentation on a yearly basis. To ensure that STAR training is available to all members of our diverse ABC retail community, presentations are offered in English, Spanish, Korean and Cantonese.

An Informed Merchants Preventing Alcohol-Related Crime Tendencies (IMPACT) inspection must be completed at the involved premise. Retailers must take the necessary action to correct any discrepancies discovered during the IMPACT inspection. Frequently, follow-up inspections will be initiated by the LAPD to ensure adequate compliance has been achieved.

The IMPACT inspection program was developed by the California Department of ABC in 1984 and teams ABC investigators with local law enforcement to conduct up-front inspections at licensed premises. The program's major objectives are to identify instances of non-compliance and seek corrective action through a cooperative effort by enhancing the relationship between law enforcement and the ABC retail community. In the event IMPACT inspections are unavailable, up-front ABC inspections should be conducted by the local police agency.

Retailers must enter into an oral contract with the LAPD to dispense alcoholic beverages in a responsible manner. This agreement should be shared with all employees, thereby creating an atmosphere of responsible alcoholic beverage sale and service at the licensed premise. The establishment of this agreement is a key to ensuring program success. By educating retailers to their responsibilities, providing on-site inspections to establish operational standards, and seeking individual commitment to work in partnership with law enforcement, your agency can have a positive impact toward managing alcohol-related crime.

# back-bar inspection

Continued from page 7

Participation in the program allows retailers to post distinctive placards at their businesses that alert the public to the involved retailer's commitment to the responsible sale and service of alcoholic beverages. These placards also identify the business as a location committed to reducing alcohol-related crime by working in partnership with the LAPD. In excess of 500 locations are currently participating in the Responsible ABC Retailer Program. The effectiveness of this program can be demonstrated in the fact that no location actively participating in the program has been cited or been the subject of a formal vice complaint investigation.

A key factor in the success of the Responsible Retailer Program lies within the formal recognition aspect of the program. In addition to the posting of placards, letters are mailed to each retailer involved in the program commending them for their participation and outlining their responsibilities. Operation ABC has noted that increased attendance at STAR training presentations has been a byproduct of these letters. A vast majority of ABC retailers are business oriented individuals who want to conduct business responsibly. When provided with education, training and formally recognized for their partnership with their local law enforcement agency, they will become a strong ally in our mission to reduce alcohol-related crime.

Voluntary participation in this program has had a positive impact on many ABC-licensed premises and their surrounding commercial and residential communities. By adhering to guidelines of the Responsible ABC Retailer Program and maintaining open lines of communication with the retailers, significant gains will be made in promoting responsible alcoholic beverage sale and service. For additional information on this program, please contact Operation ABC directly.