

# Stop Teen Alcohol Risk Team

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

### **Rutland County Law Enforcement's Collaborative Response To Underage Drinking**

#### **I. Policy**

It is the policy of Rutland County START (Stop Teen Alcohol Risk Team) to investigate complaints or reports of underage drinking. The Team recognizes that underage drinking, particularly when in groups, poses serious and long lasting problems for our local communities. Such underage drinking presents both a danger to the individual and a danger to community safety.

Accordingly, the Rutland County START program is dedicated to responding to underage drinking, particularly group drinking events, in a proactive manner in accordance with the accompanying guidelines. Participating agencies will promote a zero-tolerance approach to enforcing underage drinking.

#### **II. Cooperation and Multi-Agency Response**

It is understood and agreed that the Rutland County law enforcement community will work together towards the goal of reducing underage alcohol abuse. These agencies include the Rutland County Sheriff's Department, the Brandon Police Department, the Rutland City Police Department, the Castleton Police Department, the Vermont State Police, the Fair Haven Police Department, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Department of Liquor Control. These agencies present cases for prosecution to the Rutland County State's Attorney's Office.

It is recognized that a planned response to teenage group drinking is the most effective avenue to enforce the law and ensure community safety. To that end, Rutland County START will strive to prevent underage drinking events before they occur and to employ controlled dispersal techniques when events are already underway. START will also employ educational and innovative strategies.

#### **III. Agency Response**

When a report, intelligence information, or complaint of an underage drinking event is received, the recipient shall attempt to obtain as much detail and information concerning the event as possible. This information shall be promptly relayed to a supervisor.

The agency having primary jurisdiction at the location where the event is occurring shall become the supervising agency for the START response.

The Officer-In-Charge shall evaluate the credibility of the information received and assess the need to activate START personnel. This may include a drive by inspection of the area. Should START activation be deemed appropriate, the officer-in-charge shall be responsible for the coordination of the START response and act as the incident commander.

The location of a reported underage drinking event may determine which agencies are available to respond to the event upon START activation. As an example, Rutland City would not likely be asked to respond to a party

found in Poultney, unless the size or circumstances required additional resources beyond what might be available on the western side of the County.

The responding agencies shall be reimbursed for personnel and mileage expenses associated with a START activation or activity, pursuant to grant conditions then in place.

#### **IV. Investigation**

The incident commander shall determine the breadth and depth of any investigation associated with an underage drinking event. The focus of any such inquiry shall include the origin of the alcohol and the persons responsible for providing, enabling, or furnishing the alcohol.

Appropriate court process (arrests or civil tickets) will be issued for any violations determined to have been committed. All violators shall be appropriately identified and minors shall be held pending release to a parent, guardian, or custodian.

All officers shall be individually responsible for completing any reports or paperwork associated with a START activity. The agency in charge/host agency shall be responsible for forwarding any and all required reports or information to the Department of Liquor Control.

Criminal prosecution of violations will be pursued by the Rutland county States Attorney's Office.

#### **V. Definitions**

Group drinking event: A gathering of six (6) or more people where alcohol is available for consumption.

Underage: An individual who has not yet reached the age of 21 years.

**THE ABOVE TERMS ARE AGREED TO BY THE PARTIES:**

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Edgar P. Bergen  
State's Attorney

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Charlie McCarthy  
County Sheriff's Dept.

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