



# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** April 30, 2008  
**CONTACT:** John Fleming, (850) 201-3208

## **Advocates remind Floridians that unlicensed alcohol shipments are illegal**

New governmental website warns of penalties for the unlicensed sale of alcoholic beverages

**TALLAHASSEE** — The Florida Legislature is considering legislation that would address the currently unlicensed shipping of wine to Florida homes from out-of-state companies. Until legislation passes, the Florida Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking is reminding Floridians that sales and shipping from unlicensed out-of-state manufacturers remain illegal. Unlicensed sales of alcohol products carry stiff penalties, including possible jail time.

“If we can’t hold alcohol sellers accountable, there are no penalties for selling to underage drinkers. Licensing creates accountability, and that helps our state regulators protect our children,” said John Fleming, spokesman for the Florida Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking. “It’s not acceptable for wine shippers to pretend the problem doesn’t exist.”

Regarding the currently unlicensed practice of direct shipment of wine across state lines, Florida’s Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco (ABT) has recently posted on its Web site applicable provisions of the law that address the production, distribution and sale of alcohol in the state of Florida.

- Florida’s legal drinking age is 21, and Florida’s Beverage Law makes it unlawful for any person to sell, give, serve, or permit to be served alcoholic beverages to a person under 21 years of age.
- In addition, the willful violation of any provision of Florida’s Beverage Law concerning the excise tax constitutes a felony of the third degree (Section 562.45, F.S.).
- State law makes it a second degree misdemeanor to manufacture, bottle, distribute, sell, or in any way deal in alcoholic beverages without first obtaining a license from the state (Section 562.12, F.S.). More information about the current state of Florida’s Beverage Law may be found at [www.myflorida.com/dbpr/abt/index.html](http://www.myflorida.com/dbpr/abt/index.html).

*The Florida Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking is made up of Florida business leaders, law enforcement, clergy, educators and community groups dedicated to protecting state laws relating to the sale of beer, wine and liquor over the Internet, by phone or through the mail by unlicensed out-of-state companies. The Coalition supports Florida law requiring that alcohol only be sold through licensed businesses that can be held accountable for violations. For more information, visit our Web site at [www.preventunderagedrinking.com](http://www.preventunderagedrinking.com).*