

Criminal Liability of a Party Host

If you love to host parties, you must know that you are deemed responsible for your guests, even if they have already left your home.

There may be nothing wrong with ensuring your guests have a good time and serving alcoholic beverages at a party, but keep in mind that you may be considered liable for both minor and adult guests if they end up harming themselves or others. If, several hours later, one of your drunken guests injures someone while operating a vehicle, then you may still be held partially responsible for the accident.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) states that all party hosts need to take certain measures to ensure their guests' safety, such as checking if all guests have designated drivers, as well having contact details of taxi companies and towing companies ready.

As a host, it is your duty to take note of the amount of alcohol your guests are consuming. When watching a game on television, for instance, learn from stadiums that do not serve alcoholic beverages after the third quarter. Also, serve food and non-alcoholic beverages.

Social host liability laws in most states specifically target underage drinking. According to these laws, you may be held either civilly or criminally liable if you knowingly, willingly, or recklessly provided a venue for underage drinking.

Parents and party hosts may be charged with a misdemeanor, which could result in fines amounting to \$1,000 and even jail time of up to 90 days. In certain situations, an individual injured or hurt by an inebriated minor may also be entitled to damages from the adult who provided the alcohol, or who allowed underage drinking.

Party hosts must also be cautious of other hazards apart from DUI. They may also be responsible for guests who fight or fall on your property. To be safe, it is best to keep your party guest list to a manageable size. Also, only invite guests who you know personally.

About the Author: [Douglas Kans](#) has 17 years experienced defending people charged with DWI and other crimes in the Minneapolis / St. Paul area.