

ALCOHOL PES RESEARCH BRIEF:

POLICIES RESTRICTING HOURS OF ALCOHOL SALES

Prepared October 4, 2017, by Tara McGuire, State Alcohol Prevention Enhancement Site (Alcohol PES) Manager, Bluegrass Prevention Center, tkmcguire@bluegrass.org, 859-225-3296

Regulating alcohol hours of sale is a complex issue for communities. The following is a brief report on available related research and local observations on the potential effect of hours of alcohol sales on underage, binge and excessive drinking prevention, community safety and public health.

NATIONAL RESEARCH:

I. CDC'S COMMUNITY PREVENTION SERVICES TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Community Preventive Services Task Force, an independent, nonfederal, volunteer body of public health and prevention experts, recommends several evidence-based community strategies to reduce harmful alcohol use. [Learn more about the Community Guide's findings.](#) [CDC Fact Sheets – Preventing Excessive Alcohol Use, 2016](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. [Regulation of Alcohol Outlet Density](#)

Alcohol outlet density refers to the number and concentration of alcohol retailers (such as bars, restaurants, liquor stores) in an area.³

B. [Increasing Alcohol Taxes](#)

Alcohol excise taxes may include wholesale, excise, ad valorem, or sales taxes, all of which affect the price of alcohol. Taxes can be levied at the federal, state, or local level on beer, wine or distilled spirits.⁴

C. [Dram Shop Liability](#)

Dram shop liability, also known as commercial host liability, refers to laws that hold alcohol retail establishments liable for injuries or harms caused by illegal service to intoxicated or underage customers.⁵

D. [Maintaining Limits on Days of Sale](#)

States or communities may limit the days that alcohol can legally be sold or served.⁶

E. [Electronic Screening and Brief Intervention \(e-SBI\)](#)

e-SBI uses electronic devices (e.g., computers, telephones, or mobile devices) to facilitate delivery of key elements of traditional screening and brief interventions. At a minimum, e-SBI involves screening individuals for excessive drinking, and delivering a brief intervention, which provides personalized feedback about the risks and consequences of excessive drinking.⁸

F. [Enhanced Enforcement of Laws Prohibiting Sales To Minors](#)

Enhanced enforcement programs initiate or increase compliance checks at alcohol retailers (such as bars, restaurants, and liquor stores) for laws prohibiting the sale of alcohol to minors.⁹

G. [Maintaining Limits on Hours of Sale](#)

States or communities may limit the hours that alcohol can legally be sold or served.⁷

1. **LINK:** <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/alcohol-excessive-consumption-maintaining-limits-hours-sale>

2. **Summary of Results:** [The Community Guide Alcohol – Excessive Consumption: Maintaining Limits on Hours of Sale](#)

I. Increasing hours of sale by two or more hours in on-premises settings (e.g., bars and restaurants)

Ten studies qualified for the review. These studies reported on six events that changed the hours of alcohol sales by two or more hours.

- Extending hours of sale by 2 to 4 hours was associated with:
 - a. An increase in alcohol consumption (1 study, Australia)
 - b. A relative increase in motor vehicle crash injuries ranging from 4% to 11% (2 studies, Australia)
 - c. A shift in timing of motor vehicle crashes corresponding to the change in closing time of the outlet (1 study, Australia)
- Removing restrictions on hours of sale, i.e., allowing sales of alcohol 24 hours a day or allowing outlets to stay open to any hour, was associated with:
 - a. An increase in motor vehicle crash injuries (1 study, Australia)
 - b. An increase in emergency room admissions, injuries, fighting, and suspected driving while intoxicated (1 study, Iceland)
 - c. An increase in alcohol-related assault and injury (1 study, England)
 - d. A decrease in violent crime offenses (1 study, England)
 - e. A decrease in maxillofacial trauma (1 study, England)

II. Increasing hours of sale by less than two hours in on-premises settings (e.g., bars and restaurants)

Six studies qualified for the review. These studies reported on five events that changed the hours of alcohol sales by less than two hours.

- Effect estimates from these studies were inconsistent, suggesting no substantial effect on alcohol-related outcomes of changes in hours of alcohol sales that are less than two hours.

II. EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICIES RESTRICTING HOURS OF ALCOHOL SALES STUDY [Am J of Prev Med, 2010](#)

Hahn, Robert A. et al. "Effectiveness of Policies Restricting Hours of Alcohol Sales in Preventing Excessive Alcohol Consumption and Related Harms." *American journal of preventive medicine* 39.6 (2010): 590–604. *PMC*. Web. 4 Oct. 2017. -- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3712516/>

Abstract

Local, state, and national policies that limit the hours that alcoholic beverages may be available for sale might be a means of reducing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. The methods of the *Guide to Community Preventive Services* were used to synthesize scientific evidence on the effectiveness of such policies. All of the studies included in this review assessed the effects of increasing hours of sale in on-premises settings (in which alcoholic beverages are consumed where purchased) in high-income nations. None of the studies was conducted in the U.S. The review team's initial assessment of this evidence suggested that changes of less than 2 hours were unlikely to significantly affect excessive alcohol consumption and related harms; to explore this hypothesis, studies assessing the effects of changing hours of sale by less than 2 hours and by 2 or more hours were assessed separately.

There was sufficient evidence in ten qualifying studies to conclude that increasing hours of sale by 2 or more hours increases alcohol-related harms. Thus, disallowing extensions of hours of alcohol sales by 2 or more should be expected to prevent alcohol-related harms, while policies decreasing hours of sale by 2 hours or more at on-premises alcohol outlets may be an effective strategy for preventing alcohol-related harms. The evidence from six qualifying studies was insufficient to determine whether increasing hours of sale by less than 2 hours increases excessive alcohol consumption and related harms.

Findings and Recommendations from Other Reviews and Advisory Groups

Several scientific reviews¹¹⁻¹⁴ have concluded that restricting the hours when alcohol may be sold is an effective strategy for reducing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. One review,¹¹ funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), found substantial evidence of harms associated with expanding the hours and days of alcohol sales. This conclusion was based on previous empirical research indicating that the expansion of the hours and days of sale increased prevalence of excessive alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems. Most prior reviews have combined findings on days and hours and none have examined a threshold effect. The CSAP review included studies prior to 1999; a recent review¹⁴ includes studies published between 2000 and 2008. The present review covers both periods using the systematic methods of the *Community Guide* described below.

Several international bodies have also recommended the control of hours or days of sale, or both as means of reducing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms.¹⁵ For example, a recent review¹⁶ of alcohol control strategies by the WHO found that limiting of hours of sale was an effective method for reducing alcohol-related harms. In Ireland, the Department of Health and Children's Strategic Task Force on Alcohol¹⁷ concluded (p. 30) that "restricting any further increases in the physical availability of alcohol (number of outlets and times of sales)" is among the most effective policy measures for influencing alcohol consumption and related harms.

Other Harms and Benefits

Maintaining hours of sale may sustain quality of life in communities by controlling alcohol availability, excessive alcohol consumption, and health and social harms resulting from excessive alcohol use (e.g., public drunkenness); evidence of effects on quality of life were not provided by the studies reviewed. Although it is possible that crimes such as illicit alcohol sales may increase in localities where the hours of sale are limited, no evidence of such effects was found in any of the studies evaluated. One study²⁶ noted increased workload among law enforcement personnel associated with expanded hours of sale.

Summary

This review found that increasing the hours when alcohol may be sold by ≥ 2 hours increased alcohol-related harms. Evidence supporting this conclusion was based on studies conducted in on-premises settings outside the U.S. According to *Community Guide* rules of evidence, these findings provided sufficient evidence for the effectiveness of maintaining limits on hours of sale for the reduction of alcohol-related harms when efforts are made to increase hours by ≥ 2 .¹⁰ Because no qualifying study assessed the effects of reducing hours of sale, the only direct inference that can be made is that reducing hours of sale by ≥ 2 is likely to avert alcohol-related harms. However, it may also be reasonable to expect that reducing hours of sale would also reduce alcohol-related harms.

Because there was no consistent effect on excessive alcohol consumption or related harms of increasing hours of sales by < 2 hours, according to *Community Guide* rules of evidence, there was insufficient evidence that this intervention had a meaningful effect.¹⁰ Insufficient evidence means that it is not possible to determine from the available evidence whether this policy change had a meaningful effect.

III. CAMY & CADCA's Strategizer 55 – Regulating Alcohol Outlet Density An Action Guide: [Strategizer 55, 2011](#)

This Action Guide caters to alcohol outlet density rather than hours of sale, but many of the same techniques discussed in this Action Guide can be useful in discussing with community leaders the potential effect of hours of sale on related health and social problems.

- A. This Action Guide provides an example of the use of GIS mapping on page 4 in the right column.

GIS Mapping can utilized to plot on a geographic map of a given prescient, city, or county, the alcohol outlets with distinction provided by outlet type of hours of sale in relation to the locations of occurrences/ arrests for violent crimes distinguished by hour of occurrence based on local arrest and/or conviction data obtained through local law enforcement.

- Locations of alcohol sales by outlet type may be obtained using the KY ABC's online license look up tool at https://dppweb.ky.gov/ABCStar/portal/abconline/page/License_Lookup/portal.aspx.
- The hours of sale data is generally obtained through local observation.

- B. This Action Guide provides further context for the Community Guide Recommended Strategies referenced above for preventing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms including MAINTAINING LIMITS ON HOURS OF SALE on page 6, relation to the role of state and local public health agencies in implementing these strategies like limits on hours of sale.
- C. On page 11, this Action Guide provides 7 factors to consider in addition to hours of sale (and outlet density in this action guide) which might affect how your GIS map looks in relation to factors that contribute to related health and social problems.

III. *Effectiveness of Limiting Alcohol Outlet Density for Reducing Excessive Alcohol Consumption and Related Harms 2011 UDETC Webinar PowerPoint by Michael Sparks, MA, Alcohol Policy Specialist*

The 2011 UDETC Webinar PowerPoint demonstrates examples of how to utilize GIS Mapping for substance abuse prevention and policy efforts.

IV. September 2013 Louisville Metro Council 2-4am Packaged Alcohol Sales Ban Ordinance

[2- O-166-08-13 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 113.40, 113.41 AND 113.42 TO ELIMINATE THE LICENSES FOR PACKAGE RETAILERS TO SELL WINE AND DISTILLED SPIRITS BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 2 AM AND 4 AM. \(AS AMENDED\)](#)

Louisville initially addressed this issue and passed an ordinance to eliminate the licenses for packaged retailers to sell wine and distilled spirits between the hours of 2AM and 4AM. The Council along with concerned communities members and preventionists utilized GIS mapping to plot on a map of Louisville the locations of alcohol outlets distinguishing outlets which sold during the hours of 2-4AM, and locations of violent crimes by type and hour of arrest.