

## **Five Kearney businesses cited for selling alcohol to minors**

Written by KSNB Staff

KEARNEY, Neb. (KSNB) - Five Kearney businesses failed compliance checks over the weekend.

Eight officers from the Kearney Police Department, Buffalo County Sheriff’s Office and the Nebraska State Patrol checked a total of 37 businesses in Buffalo County.

Five of the 37 were cited for selling alcohol to minors. Authorities said it was a significant increase in the non-compliant rate from June 2023 checks that saw five (7%) of 69 businesses cited for selling to minors.

### Alcohol Compliance Checks for September 2023

Business	Location	Non-compliant
El Potrero	5012 3rd Avenue	X
Fairfield Inn	510 W Talmadge Road	X
Gourmet House Japanese Cuisine	1325 2nd Avenue	X
La Quinta Inn & Suites	108 3rd Avenue	X
Skeeter Barnes	516 2nd Avenue S	X

One theme that emerged during those compliance checks was the importance of checking minor IDs and verifying their age. Out of the 10 sales to minors during these two operations, nine (90%) did not even ask to see the minors’ identification prior to providing them the alcohol. All of the 36 businesses that refused the sale this past weekend checked the minors’ IDs.

“We encourage all businesses to establish policies that require employees to check IDs,” said Kearney Police Lieutenant Gabe Kowalek. “IDs are vertical for minors and clearly state in bold red letters that the minor is under the legal drinking age of 21. It’s the easiest and most effective way to keep Buffalo County youth and our community safe. We look forward to working with our local businesses to achieve 100 percent compliance next time.”

The five businesses cited are facing their first sale to a minor violation within the last four years. If found guilty by the LCC, these businesses could be facing 15-25 days of suspension that they could choose to pay off as a fine at \$50 per day in lieu of suspension. The two businesses listed below had previous sales to minor violations, but they fell outside of the four-year window that the LCC uses for determining progressive penalties:

- El Potrero, 5012 3rd Ave, Kearney (11/08, 5/14, 10/18);
- Skeeter Barnes, 516 2nd Ave S, Kearney (10/07, 12/09).

To report underage drinking or adults providing alcohol to minors, call the statewide tip line at 1-866-Must-B-21 (687-8221). It’s anonymous, and it’s the right call. Individuals are urged to call 911 to report an underage drinking party in progress.

Heightened enforcements are supported by the Nebraska Department of Transportation - Highway Safety Office. NDOT-HSO also funds the tip line. Project Extra Mile helped to coordinate the enforcement efforts.