

ALCOHOL-TO-GO ACCESS

WHAT WE LEARNED



Lack of ID Checks Makes Alcohol-to-Go a Growing Concern for Youth Access

TxSDY's Alcohol-to-Go Research Project

The Alcohol-to-Go law, passed in 2021, allows restaurants to sell alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption as long as the order includes a food purchase. Due to concerns that the new law would make it easier for underage drinkers to obtain alcohol, Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth (TxSDY) began assessing the policy to understand the law's impact on youth access to alcohol.

Over a three-year period, TxSDY worked with a professional evaluator to develop and implement the Community Alcohol-to-go Research Tool (CART) and conduct focus groups. Our work allowed us to monitor alcohol-to-go orders and see how often stores and delivery services checked IDs.

TxSDY's research findings were published in *Health Behavior and Policy Review* in February 2025. It is one of the few published studies on this topic in the country.

Scan the QR code to read the full article.



Key Findings

65%

of all alcohol-to-go orders did not involve an ID check

27%

of all delivery orders involved no ID checks

ID failure rates varied significantly by delivery method:

24%

of third-party delivery drivers failed to check IDs when delivering orders

50%

of restaurant or store staff members failed to check IDs when delivering orders

Core Insights



Inconsistent Training

Training requirements and opportunities varied across third-party delivery drivers and restaurant/store staff members. This resulted in lack of clarity around some of the law's requirements, as well as protocols and best practices for handling alcohol-to-go orders.



Unclear Policies

Many restaurants and bars had no clear policies and procedures related to a chain of command when it came to ensuring that orders were only delivered when a state-issued ID was verified.



Technology Gaps

As required by law, third-party delivery drivers have technology that bar and restaurant staff lack or have limited access to, nor are they required to have it. This appeared to be one reason why third-party delivery drivers had a higher compliance rate with ID checks.



Insufficient Compliance Protocols

Unlike brick-and-mortar stores, where standardized, well-tested compliance check protocols exist, alcohol-to-go has created a new landscape in need of adaptations to current enforcement and compliance systems.

Recommendations

Our findings show that retailers, law enforcement, and policymakers still have work to do to make sure ID and compliance checks for alcohol-to-go orders are as reliable as those for brick-and-mortar stores.

The following recommendations are informed by our research, aimed at strengthening compliance across both retail and delivery settings, and designed to help reduce youth access to alcohol.



Require mandatory ID checks for all alcohol-to-go sales.



Use electronic ID verification systems.



Develop standardized alcohol-to-go pick up and delivery training.



Establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for delivery drivers and restaurant/store staff.



Create updated, thorough processes for conducting compliance checks for alcohol-to-go orders.



Provide adequate funding for increased compliance checks and enforcement of the law.