

SAFER UTAH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ANNOUNCING SAFER UT: PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE DRINKING PRACTICES AND COMMON-SENSE ALCOHOL LAWS

Salt Lake City, UT – Today marks the official launch of SAFER Utah, a new organization dedicated to promoting responsible drinking practices as well as data-backed, common-sense alcohol regulations.

“We believe it’s time that responsible Utah drinkers have a permanent seat at the table when it comes to shaping laws that affect their daily lives,” said Brian Jones, one of SAFER’s grassroots founders. “Once, we were a small group of motivated consumers brainstorming in a backyard. Now, we’re creating a culture of safe drinking and smart regulations to benefit all Utahns. This culture isn’t about promoting alcohol, it’s about safety. When safe consumption is as stigmatized as alcohol abuse and misuse, bad behavior is incentivized. Alcohol abuse hurts everyone. We aim to curb alcohol misuse in all forms and maintain Utah’s last place status for DUIs (impaired driving infractions). You can help by celebrating adults in your circle that practice responsible drinking.”

A Utah first, the organization aims to foster a culture of teamwork and collaboration, bringing together all stakeholders—consumers, non-drinkers, faith & community leaders, law enforcement, prevention, industry members, public safety officials, educators, mental health & addiction professionals, municipal leaders, and lawmakers. “We’re here to listen, not take sides, belittle, or point fingers. It takes all of us to make all Utahns feel safe and welcome,” added Crystal Young, SAFER lobbyist and spokesperson. “We are collaborators and not antagonizers. Our approach is built on listening, data, and compromise.”

Organizers emphasized the first half of SAFER’s mission: curb alcohol misuse and abuse. SAFER UT defines alcohol misuse as any harmful behavior ranging from socially disruptive to life-threatening: underage drinking, driving while intoxicated, operating vehicles or equipment under the influence, drinking while pregnant, alcohol addiction or dependence, excessive consumption, abetting dating and sexual violence, alcohol-fueled risky sexual behavior, drinking to the point of negative personality changes, self-medication, mixing alcohol with other substances, and neglecting personal responsibilities. SAFER Utah also highlighted the importance of respecting non-drinkers, especially those in recovery, ensuring their comfort in social situations. A full definition is available at www.saferdrinks.org and below.

The launch announcement marks the release of SAFER UT’s first “Booze Barometer,” a survey designed to capture public opinion on a range of possible regulatory and public safety laws. The first survey is open to all Utahns at www.saferdrinks.org. SAFER organizers emphasize that the Barometer is not exclusive to adult drinkers—it is open to anyone who wants to contribute their ideas for sensible and impactful public safety and alcohol regulations.

“Our goal is data. The Barometer will provide invaluable insights into the views and concerns of Utah's communities,” said Alejandro Puy, marketing & logistical consultant for SAFER UT. “At SAFER UT, data guides all of our data and all of our conversations. Tell us what you, your business, your organization, or your institution want to keep and want to add!”

SAFER Utah invites all Utahns who care about fairness, safety, liberty, and responsibility to join its growing community. The organization aims to gain 5,000 members in its first two years. “We’re a social welfare org, not a political or electoral organization,” added Young. “We want this on the record: SAFER isn’t running nor plans to run any voter initiatives. We won’t see us pushing any extreme ideas like privatization. We will always work directly with our elected lawmakers to negotiate sensible, fair, and data-backed laws. We will measure public opinion, solicit guidance, and collect data with the Barometer, not through initiatives.”

SAFER Utah is organized as both a 501(c)(3) and a 501(c)(4) entity to enable a comprehensive approach to alcohol policy and public safety. The 501(c)(4) arm advocates for common-sense, data-backed alcohol regulations and public safety laws. The 501(c)(3) branch collects data to measure impact and will also lead adult-focused campaigns to teach responsible drinking habits.

To learn more about SAFER, take the Booze Barometer, volunteer, receive regular communications, or chip in, adults over 21 may visit www.saferdrinks.org. By the end of the month, the website will offer a variety of educational resources that teach responsible drinking practices for 21+ adults, lists the latest data & research, highlights addiction recovery steps, suggests options for local, professional recovery help, as well as resources to aid and empower parents in preventing underage drinking.

Key priorities (desired outcomes):

1. **Foster Collaboration:** Work with all stakeholders—consumers, non-drinkers, faith and community leaders, law enforcement, prevention specialists, industry members, public safety officials, educators, mental health professionals, municipal leaders, and lawmakers—to ensure all Utahns feel safe and welcome.
2. **Bridge Polarized Interests:** with no financial or ideological stakes, SAFER closes the gap between conflicting objectives, fostering pragmatic solutions.
3. **Protect our Neighbors:**

- a. **maintain Utah’s last place status** for DUIs
 - b. **reduce alcohol abuse and misuse through data-driven policies**, prevention strategies, and public awareness campaigns
 - c. **fill a gap in existing safety campaigns** by targeting Utah’s many middle aged adults who sometimes start drinking without prior exposure to responsible drinking practices
4. **Consumer Representation:** increase civic engagement by voicing the priorities of responsible adult drinkers and non-drinkers in policy discussions, researched through tools such as the Booze Barometer
 5. **Pass common-sense, data-backed laws and regulations:** secure data-driven, modernized policies that increase both responsible drinking or abstinence, without compromising safety.
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Additional information:

SAFER UT acronym:

- 501c4 arm = Stewards of Alcohol Fairness and Efficient Regulation
- 501c3 arm = Stewards of Alcohol Facts, Education, and Responsibility

Vision: Distill a Utah where safe sipping secures fair laws. Where all protect their neighbors. We won’t stop until alcohol abuse – and misuse – dries up so all respect the liberty to drink—or not.

C4 Mission: Advance common-sense, informed alcohol policy crafted by and for our members, responsible locals.

C3 Mission: Make responsible drinking the norm and safety the priority through data-driven alcohol abuse prevention.

SAFER UTAH’S DEFINITION OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

The misuse and abuse of alcohol spans a spectrum of harmful behaviors, from socially disruptive to life-threatening:

1. **Underage drinking** - research shows that when parents set firm boundaries & consequences for underage drinking, demonstrate responsible consumption, and teach refusal skills, their children are less likely to misuse alcohol later in life
2. **Driving while intoxicated**
3. **Operating any vehicle or equipment while intoxicated** (including bikes, scooters, or heavy machinery)
4. **Drinking while pregnant**
5. **Addiction or dependence on alcohol use**
6. **Excessive consumption (including binge drinking)**

7. **To facilitate dating & sexual violence:** coercion, weaken another's ability to consent, weaken resistance or refusal skills, immobilize, as well as incapacitate, groom, manipulate, or control a target or partner
8. **Drinking in any amount that causes personality changes,** especially anger, violence, and abuse (physical, domestic, verbal, sexual)
9. **Alcohol-fueled risky sexual behavior**
10. **Self-medication**
11. **Mixing alcohol with prescription medications or other substances**
12. **Belittling or failing to accommodate non-drinkers,** including being inconsiderate of those in recovery when consuming alcohol around them
13. **Neglecting responsibilities – Failing to meet obligations at work, home, or school**

While the loud, obnoxious person at a sports bar causes discomfort, they pale in comparison to the grave danger posed by someone driving the wrong way on a freeway. SAFER recognizes this range, focusing intensely on preventing the most hazardous behaviors while also addressing less severe misuse. Our approach aims to reduce all forms of alcohol abuse and misuse, promoting community safety and well-being.

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