

Fake IDs infiltrate HR

Jack Stilwell, *Social Media Editor*

High school student drug and substance use has been rising each year, according to DrugAbuse. An anonymous senior said, "I drink, smoke, and vape every week. It has become a part of my daily routine."

In order to buy these substances, some teens have turned towards buying fake identifier's, or "IDs". An anonymous senior said, "I first got a fake ID to buy my friends and I alcohol, but lately I have been using it to sell to other kids."

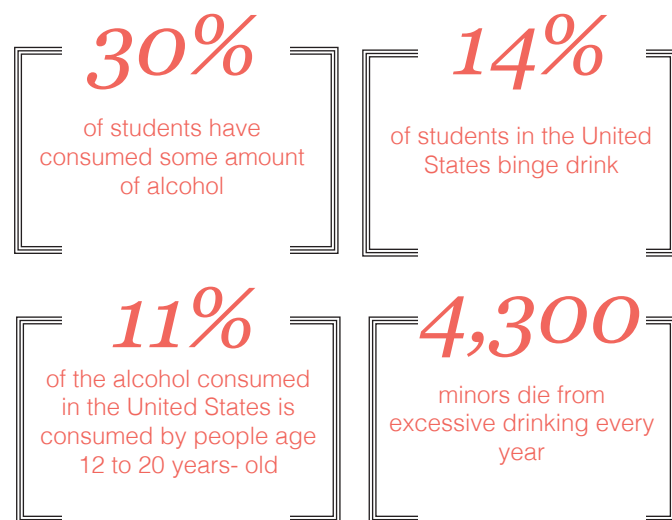
Possessing a fake ID is a class 3 misdemeanor, but there are other charges related to it, such as Minor in Possession of Alcohol, a petty offense, and Identity Theft, a class 4 felony, according to CriminalDefenseLawyer. There are about eight charges relating to a fake ID. Students caught with fake IDs usually get two misdemeanor charges and must attend educational classes, according to the Coloradoan.

Students use websites to order fake IDs online, or they use the IDs of older friends or family. They will often order IDs with friends, as the cost goes down the more people you have getting one. The typical cost of a fake ID is \$100, according to SFWeekly.

By submitting a photo of oneself and information like height, weight, eye color, hair color, along with a wire transfer of money, the buyer can have their fake ID shipped to their house. These IDs ship in containers with products like hair extensions covering them to mask the ID when going through transit.

Deputy Dumont, school resource officer, said, "You're putting your information on this website, and you have no control of what that website

keeps. How do you know that they are using your information for good?" According to the Fort Collins Police Department, fake ID websites can use personal information to steal buyers' identities, opening fake accounts to make purchases.



Statistics gathered from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention. Infographic by Zach Salcido. Source: CDC

The new age of fake IDs are scannable and passable to the naked eye, making it hard for retailers to notice. States are taking measures such as putting small engravings on IDs to help separate real ones from fake ones. Often teens will order from states with easier to fake IDs, like Wyoming or New Mexico.

"We haven't had an issue with having to confiscate an ID in several years, but that's not to say that I have taken one and didn't realize," said Shawnee Valdez, front end supervisor of Highlands Wineseller. "If it's a really well-made ID, and it's out of state, it can be tough."

Due to the IDs being scannable, many retailers are having to look for other methods, such as cross referencing questions regarding the ID. Valdez said, "You ask what their birthday is, you ask what their zodiac symbol is,

and more."

Police officers will often conduct a sting operation by sending in an undercover officer with a fake ID; this is to see if liquor stores are following protocol. Dumont said, "Through this we've made liquor store owners more aware of what fake IDs look like."

Retailers are supposed to get police involved in instances where someone used a fake ID. An anonymous senior said, "Most places won't call the cops on you; they'll just take your ID and tell you not to come back." This has created a culture of students who don't fear the consequences, as some retailers are lighter on them.

A few retailers in the Highlands Ranch area will not even ID minors. An anonymous senior said, "I was able to walk into a liquor store late at night and buy alcohol without them even asking for my ID."

However, not everyone has the same outcome when using a fake ID. "I was in Wyoming at a concert and I bought two beers at a stand. A cop behind me asked for my ID, and I handed him the fake which came from Wyoming," an anonymous student, senior, said. "I got caught and had to wait for my parents to get me. I got a ton of tickets and had to go to Wyoming for court."

Last year, a student at HR was caught with a fake ID after someone used the Text-a-Tip service. The student was searched and after the ID was found was given to the SRO to face consequences. Rob Uttecht, security guard, said, "We've caught around three students with fake IDs in total."

According to the CDC, underage drinking can cause disruption of mental and physical growth, memory problems, increased risk of depression and suicide. Yet, students will continue to buy alcohol. Dumont said, "I just hope teens are being safe about it."