

Impact of the Social Host Ordinance in the Cities of Carlsbad, Oceanside and Vista, California

Submitted to



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Introduction

In 2003, the County of San Diego and many of its cities adopted social host ordinances. In September 2010, the City of Del Mar became the final city in the County to adopt a social host ordinance such that at the time of this report, all 18 municipalities and the County have social host ordinances, though enforcement varies by jurisdiction. This report discusses the use of the SHO in the Tri-City area of the north coastal region of San Diego County which include the cities of Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Vista. The Cities of Oceanside and Vista passed Social Host Ordinances (SHO) in 2003, modeled after the city of San Diego ordinance that included a fine and possible imprisonment as a result of hosting a party where persons under the age of 21 (underage) are provided alcohol. In 2007, Oceanside's ordinance was amended to more explicitly state the intent of the Ordinance as a result of a court ruling related to the San Diego Ordinance. In September 2009, Carlsbad passed a social host ordinance, making it the final city in the Tri-City area.

The purpose of a SHO is to reduce youth access to alcohol at private parties, where the alcohol is often provided by friends, siblings, parents, or strangers. If a person violates the SHOs in Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Vista the following may result:

- A misdemeanor for a person to allow or host a party, gathering or event at his or her place of residence or other private property where 3 or more minors are present and alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs are being consumed by any minor.
- Persons cited must pay a fine to the city and/or provide monies in order to recoup the costs of the police resources that were necessary to handle and safely disperse the party.

A "host" is defined as an individual who hosts or allows a party, gathering or event where underage persons (less than 21 years old) are consuming alcohol. The person could be someone who owns, rents, leases, or otherwise has control of the premises where the party, gathering or event takes place.

The ultimate intention of the Social Host Ordinance is to discourage underage drinking at private parties by deterring party hosts from providing alcohol to underage persons at such parties, and to prevent underage persons from drinking at house parties. The North Coastal Prevention Coalition (NCPC) collaborated with Evalcorp to design and conduct a brief evaluation of the impact of the SHO in Oceanside and Vista in 2009. In the fall of 2010, an update to this evaluation for the cities of Oceanside and Vista was conducted, and an evaluation of the newly adopted SHO in Carlsbad was added to the study. This report summarizes available data that describes the use of the SHO, its impact in the cities of Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Vista, and how NCPC can help to support the aim of the SHO.

Methods

Interviews

A supervising officer and sergeant or deputy were interviewed in each city to gather information regarding the usefulness of the SHO in their law enforcement work and to understand how the Ordinance may be helping to curb underage drinking. Additionally, brief interviews and data requests were made to different administrative offices in each jurisdiction to collect information about how many citations were given and what were their outcomes (i.e., Data Management in Carlsbad, City Clerk in Oceanside, and City Attorney in Vista).

Survey Data

The North Coastal Prevention Coalition collected survey data from law enforcement officers in Oceanside in 2007, 2008, and 2009; and Vista in 2008, and 2009 to assess their perception of the SHO and related issues such as community need, enforcement, and expected impact. The survey also included some items related to satisfaction with training. The same survey was collected in Carlsbad in 2009 one month after the adoption of the SHO. These data are presented to demonstrate how law enforcement perceive the SHO in their city and related issues.

City Findings

Carlsbad

Since adoption of the SHO in October 2009, Carlsbad has cited 16 individuals representing 14 locations (3 persons were cited in one location in 2009). Four of the 16 occurred in the last three months of 2009, and 12 so far in 2010 (through July 2010; Figure 1). Of the 16 citations, 75% (12) were given to individuals under the age of 21, while only 13% were between 21 and 26 years old. Most persons cited were male (10). No information related to the court case associated with the citation was available at the time of this report.

Oceanside

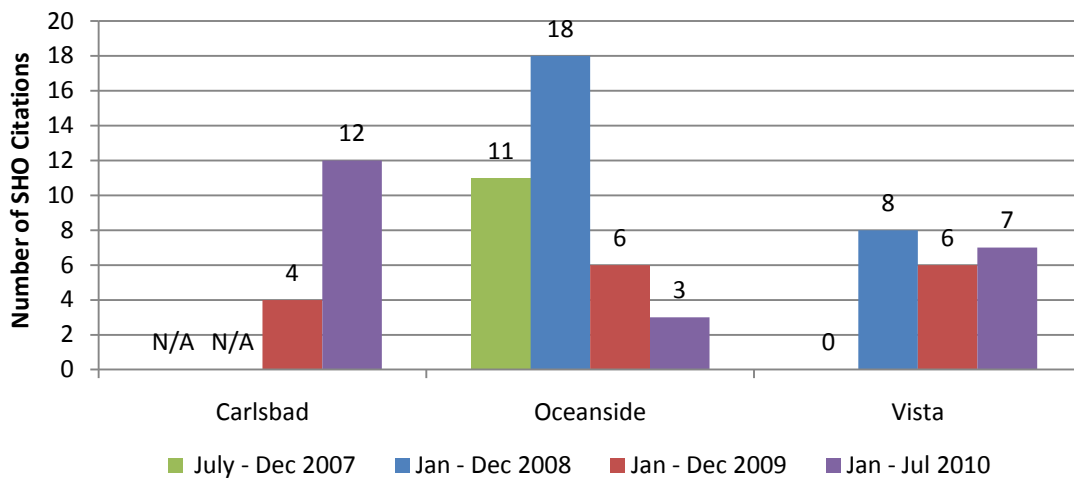
In the City of Oceanside, the number of SHO citations has been on the decline since 2008. Since 2007, there have been 38 SHO citations at 33 separate locations (in 5 locations, citations were given to two individuals). Eleven citations occurred in 2007, 18 occurred in 2008, 6 in 2009, and 3 so far this year (through June 2010, Figure 1). The citation requires reimbursement from responsible persons for the cost of enforcement services. Data regarding the results of these citations were available for 20 of the 38 citations. Of the 20 citations for which there are data, a total of \$6,222 in fines and police response costs was paid by persons who have received citations so far. Demographic data pulled from police records were available for 37 citations. Seventy-six percent of those who were cited were male (28). Just over 40% (42%) of the persons cited were between 18 and 20. Six persons under 21 (16%) received a citation and 7 (19%) were between 21 and 25 years old. Data related to the size of party was also available for 26 of the 33 locations. Just under half of the 26 locations (46%, 12) were parties where 30 or

more persons were present. Few parties were small – only 7 of the 26 had less than 10 participants. In four of the 26 parties, the officers estimated the size of the party to be at least 75 or more persons. As for the result of the citations, of the 20 citations where outcome data were available,

- 15 pled guilty to hosting a party and/or pled to a disturbing the peace charge
- 2 resulted in bench warrants, and
- 3 were dismissed.

All who pled guilty paid some level of restitution for the police response.

Figure 1. Number of Social Host Ordinance (SHO) Citations Since 2007



Carlsbad's ordinance was in effect in October 2009

Vista

In the city of Vista, there have been 21 SHO citations at 16 separate locations since 2008 (in 2 locations, citations were given to 3 individuals at each site, and at one location citations were given to 2 individuals). No citations occurred in 2007. Eight of the 14 occurred in 2008, 6 in 2009, and 7 so far in 2010 (through June 2010; Figure 1). Persons cited were responsible for the cost of enforcement services. Fines totaled \$1,581 from the 2008 Ordinance violations. Data related to fines were not available for 2009 or 2010. Demographic data of the persons receiving the citation were available for only 14 of the 21 citations. Over a quarter (29%, 4) were given to individuals under the age of 21, while 57% were between 21 and 26 years old. Most persons cited were male (9).

Of the 8 citations in 2008 where the citation was processed and outcome data were available,

- 5 were amended to a disturbing the peace charge, and police response costs were required, and
- 3 pled guilty to the Social Host charge and also paid police response costs.

Shared Findings

As reported last year, interviewees responded very similarly to one another. Rather than present these findings separately, responses from all police departments were aggregated together so that results are not redundant.

Process of Using the SHO and Challenges to Its Use

In sum, all interviewees reported that the SHO was a helpful tool that allowed them to handle large parties where underage drinking is occurring in ways that they were unable to deal with prior to the passage of the SHO. When asked if any changes were necessary to make the SHO better or more useful, Oceanside and Vista law enforcement interviewees did not recommend that any modifications be made at this time. Carlsbad law enforcement mentioned that they will try to incorporate a cost recovery requirement in their ordinance in the future.

This year, when asked about the challenges to using the SHO, most mentioned concerns about the resources that are required to collect the amount of evidence that is needed to help the City Attorneys prosecute a Social Host violation. The process generally requires more staff and takes longer to do than other citations that they issue (e.g., taking photographs, checking identification of multiple underage party-goers, documenting how many staff and how much time it took to handle the event). This year, law enforcement indicated that resources to properly enforce the SHO are available when necessary but it continues to be challenging to find a sufficient number of staff without affecting other areas, and that there are problems getting into homes in order to assess whether a citation is required. Apparently, residents are reluctant to allow law enforcement entry into their homes or refuse to answer the door.

This year, all three law enforcement agencies were provided with small grants to support special teams whose responsibility was to aid in large parties over a special event/holiday weekend (in Carlsbad and Oceanside it was used for the 4th of July weekend, in Vista it was used during graduation weekend in June). The grant had mixed results. At one jurisdiction, they did not encounter the kinds of situations that required the use of the SHO on that event/holiday weekend, thus, it may not have appeared to be effective but only because there was no demand. In another jurisdiction, the availability of extra staff and the SHO was very useful for the 4th of July weekend. All law enforcement agencies mentioned that they could use the Ordinance more often if they had greater resources to do what is necessary in situations where a Social Host violation has been observed, but with recent budget cuts, staffing is limited.

However, in one jurisdiction both interviewees perceive that there is a decline in use of the SHO because of a reduction in the number of large parties.

Perceived Impact on Underage Drinking

Interviewees were asked if the SHO has reduced underage drinking. In Carlsbad, law enforcement reported that it was too soon to see any effects of the SHO on underage drinking. In Oceanside, a decline in violations was attributed to education about the SHO and its consequences. Interviewees from Vista indicated that they were unsure whether the SHO has made an impact on underage drinking in their city.

NCPC Training for Law Enforcement on Social Host Ordinance

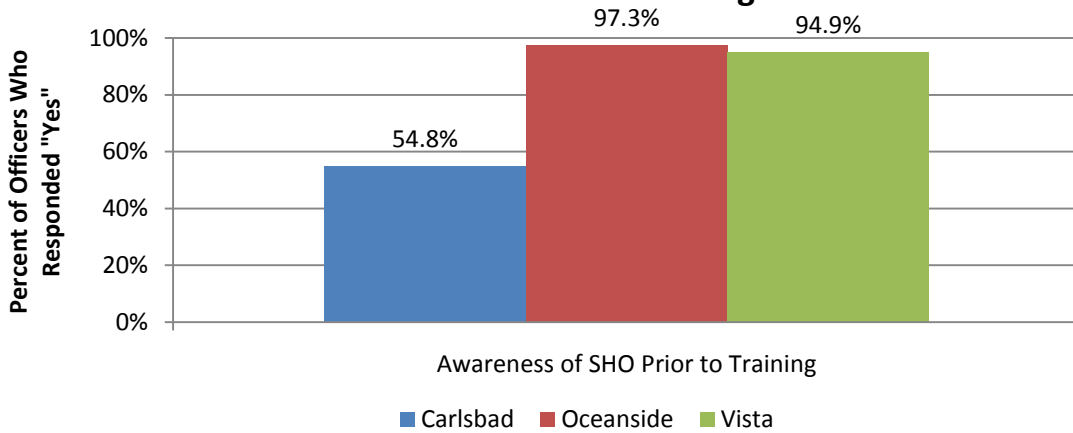
NCPC provided Social Host Ordinance training to law enforcement in Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Vista in 2009. Coalition staff provided the trainings in Carlsbad and Vista, and an Oceanside Police Lieutenant who is a member of NCPC's Board provided the trainings in Oceanside. Prior trainings were provided to Oceanside (2007, 2008) and Vista (2008). Results from those trainings in comparison to training in 2009 are presented in Appendix A.

Training provided by NCPC includes information about the specifics of the SHO and when it can be used. A total of 118 law enforcement staff were trained – 42 officers from Carlsbad, 37 from Oceanside, and 39 deputies from Vista. Below is a summary of training surveys from 2009 by jurisdiction.

In Oceanside and Vista, where the SHO has been in use for at least two years, there is a greater awareness of it than in Carlsbad at the time of the training (December 2009) (Figure 2). In Carlsbad, the SHO came into effect in October 2009 so it makes sense that many officers were not familiar with the ordinance.

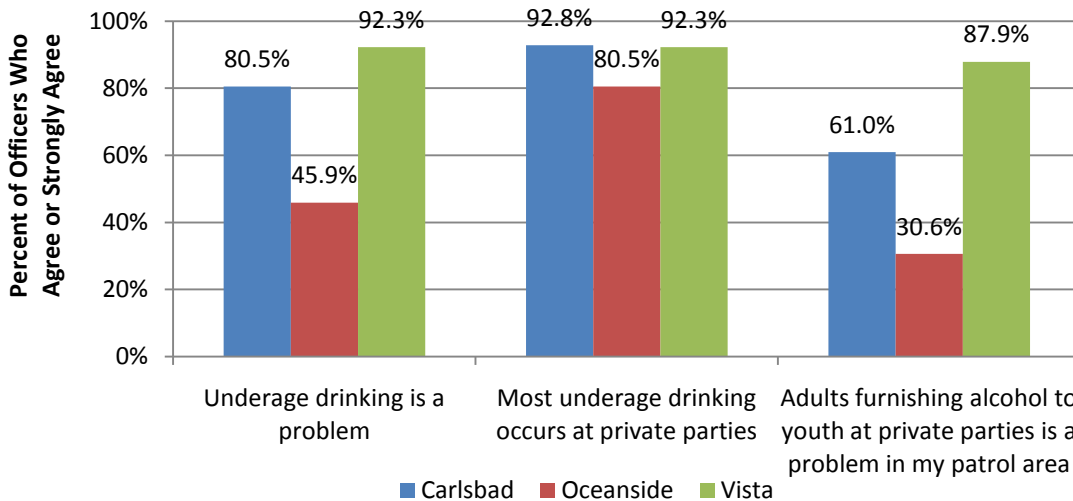
This year, there is much variability in the percentage of respondents who report responding to a call for service to private parties where underage drinking occurred. In fact, 58.5% of officers in Carlsbad, 18.9% in Oceanside and 70.8% of deputies in Vista had responded to 5 or more such calls for service in the past year. Vista had the fewest percentage of respondents who indicated that they did not (2.6%) compared to Carlsbad (34.1%) and Oceanside (43.2%). Use of the Social Host citation was variable as well, whereas 100% of Carlsbad officers did not use the SHO citation at all, likely due to the recent passage of the ordinance prior to training, more than half (51.4%) of Oceanside officers reported not using it while only 23.7% of Vista deputies had not used the citation in the past year. Overall, it appears that in Oceanside, there is perhaps a lower demand of calls where underage drinkers are at a private party and thus, fewer officers need to use the SHO citation compared to Vista. In Carlsbad, it is too early to tell.

Figure 2. Law Enforcement Training Survey: Awareness of SHO Prior to Training



Most officers in Carlsbad and deputies in Vista report that underage drinking is a problem, that most underage drinkers do so at private parties, and that adults providing alcohol to youth at private parties is a problem in their patrol area (Figure 3). Similar to the number of calls of service and use of SHO citations, fewer officers from Oceanside perceive that underage drinking is a problem and that adults furnishing alcohol to youth at private parties is a problem in their area. However, a majority of law enforcement from all three jurisdictions agree that most underage drinking occurs at private parties.

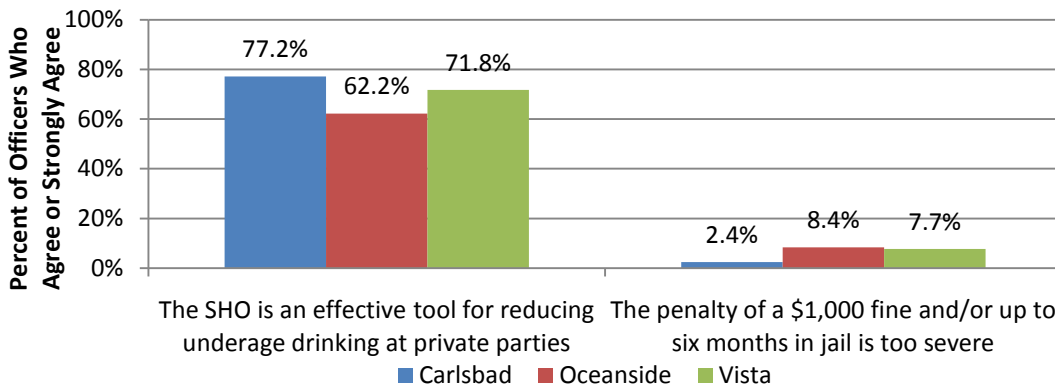
Figure 3. Law Enforcement Training Survey: Attitudes Toward Underage Drinking and Adults Furnishing to Youth



A majority agree that the SHO is an effective tool for reducing underage drinking at private parties and only a small minority agree that the penalty of a \$1000 fine and/or up to six months in jail is too severe (Figure 4). These data indicate that law enforcement surveyed are in support

of its use. Almost all law enforcement respondents in all three cities indicated that they will write Social Host citations when appropriate in the future (92.7% in Carlsbad; 75.7% in Oceanside; 89.5% in Vista).

Figure 4. Law Enforcement Training Survey: Attitude about SHO as an Effective Tool and Severity of SHO Violation Penalty



Fewer deputies in Vista (12.8%) and officers in Carlsbad (22.5%) indicate potential challenges to using the SHO compared to Oceanside (67.5%). All jurisdictions mentioned that resources required to enforce the SHO is greater than for other citations and that it is challenging to secure enough resources to do so. In Carlsbad where the SHO was just implemented at the time of the training, officers indicated challenges such as: 1) lack of public awareness of the SHO may result in residents not cooperating or complaining about the charge; 2) party hosts will refuse to answer the door; and 3) finding the responsible person at the party. In Oceanside, challenges included: 1) persons who are cited with a SHO will start civil action against the department for violating their privacy; and 2) accessing the home to assess if a SHO violation occurred. In Vista, deputies indicated two challenges with using the SHO: 1) the number of officers available limits their ability to identify all underage persons who are drinking at a party; and 2) identification of the party’s host. When asked how to make it easier to enforce the Ordinance, across jurisdictions the most common suggestions were to:

- simplify the paperwork,
- provide teams that would be dedicated to enforcing applicable situations,
- create more severe penalties so fewer persons will violate the law (e.g., greater fine or inclusion of cost recovery if not already in ordinance), and
- provide education to increase public awareness of the SHO.

Suggestions to Discourage Underage Drinking

Across jurisdictions, interviewees identified only one strategy that may help to discourage underage drinking – educational efforts. All mentioned that educating youth and their parents

about the negative consequences related to drinking may help curb underage drinking. An emphasis on providing this education near holidays and significant events (e.g., high school graduation) was deemed critical. Also, reminding parents about their responsibility and their impact on their child's behavior was another component of education that law enforcement reported was important. Interviewees also mentioned that educating youth and parents in both middle and high schools were necessary.

Suggestions for NCPC

All interviewees were asked how NCPC could assist them in the use of the SHO, or how NCPC could continue to support the SHO. Some mentioned that NCPC can provide education to the community and to law enforcement about the SHO and its consequences, such as relaying information about how many citations were given and what were the outcomes. Several high-ranking respondents would like to collaborate more closely with NCPC on this issue, as they see NCPC as a knowledgeable resource for them and the community. One interviewee mentioned that in their jurisdiction, there is turnover of leadership on a regular basis (i.e., lieutenants change positions and responsibilities regularly). Thus, it is important for NCPC to coordinate with their jurisdiction often so that when turnover occurs, NCPC will be aware of the shift in leadership and will be able to make a connection with new leadership quickly. Lastly, several indicated that any NCPC training that could be provided to law enforcement was welcome.

Summary

Overall, it appears that the SHO is a helpful tool for law enforcement in all three jurisdictions. The SHO allows them to enforce situations that they could not without this local law. Though efforts to enforce the SHO are time-consuming and resource-intensive, all three continue to use it when it is possible. Social Host violation statistics demonstrate that the Ordinance is being used in all jurisdictions by law enforcement and that in at least one jurisdiction, declines in its use is seen. Reduced staffing levels were reported but are not reported as affecting the use of the SHO by officers. Concerns about the needed resources to document a SHO violation, concerns about residents not allowing access to homes and identification of the party host are common challenges to the use of the SHO.

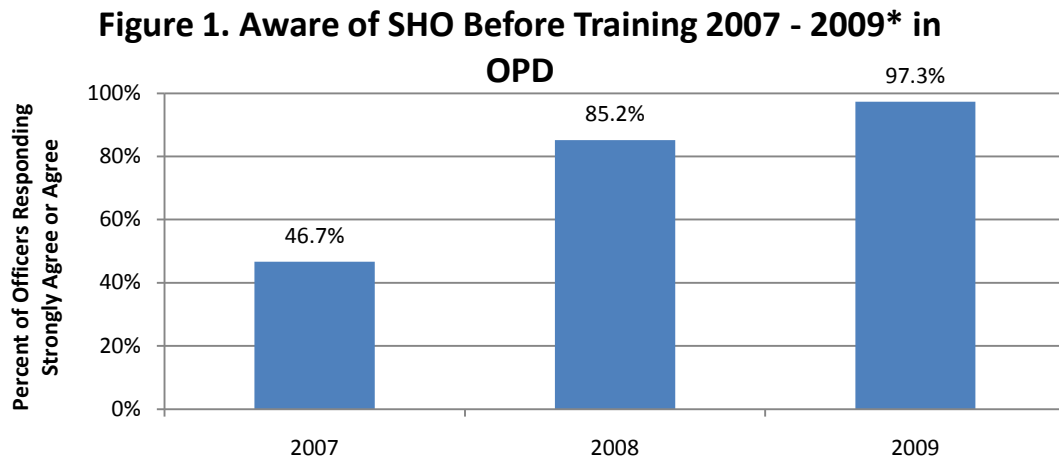
Support for the SHO is demonstrated by local law enforcement. Law enforcement indicated, through interview and survey, that underage drinking at private parties is an issue and that the SHO can be an effective tool to reduce underage drinking at such events. Though there are no data that can demonstrate a reduction in underage drinking at private parties according to law enforcement interviewees, they indicate that they see fewer parties where underage drinking has occurred.

Recommendations were provided by law enforcement interviewees about how to discourage underage drinking in their local jurisdictions. Increased education and community awareness were suggested, as they believe that with greater community knowledge, greater changes may be seen in underage drinking, particularly at private parties. They also indicated that NCPC

should continue to collaborate with law enforcement and help disseminate information about the use of SHO in their respective city.

Appendix A: Analysis of Law Enforcement Training Survey – Oceanside Police Department (OPD)

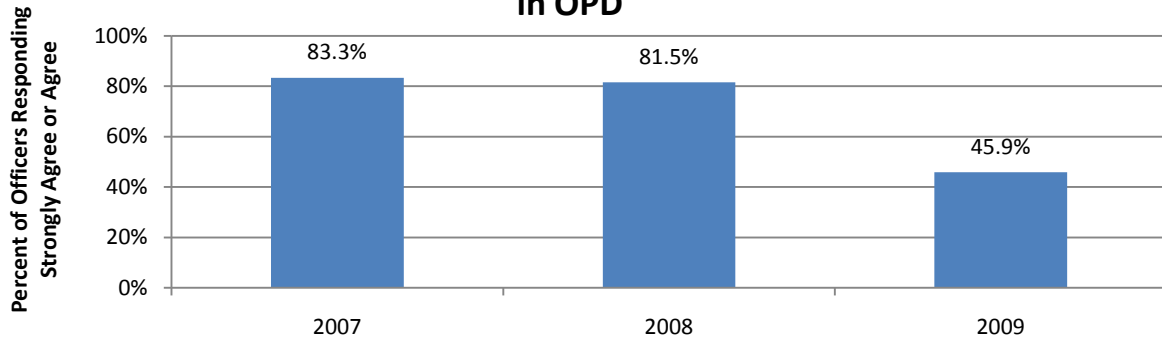
Training surveys collected at Oceanside Police Department were examined across years, as well as by comparing officer responses from 2007, 2008 and 2009 (Table 1, 2 and 3). Across trainings and survey administrations, a majority of officers were knowledgeable about the Social Host Ordinance (SHO) prior to the training. However, year-by-year analyses suggest a minority of officers were aware of the ordinance in 2007 (46.7%) to almost all officers (97.3%) who attended training in 2009 (Figure 1). Efforts to educate law enforcement about the SHO and possible positive consequences in the community appear to be increasing awareness.



* Indicates statistically significant difference ($p < .05$)

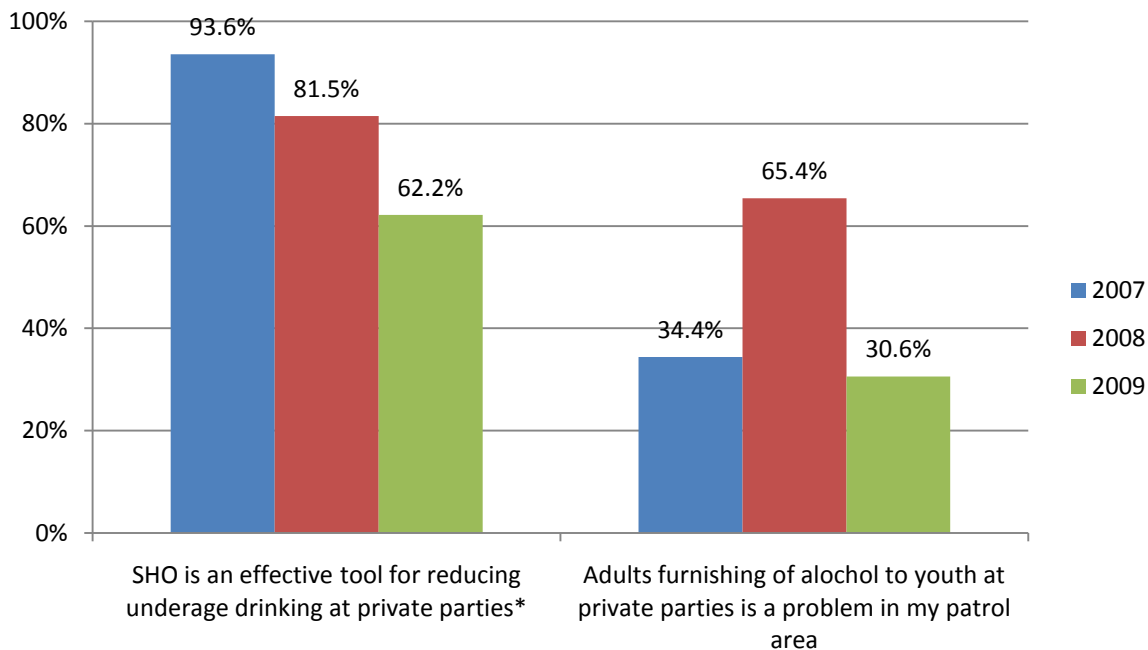
Overall, most officers think underage drinking is a problem (68.1%) and that it most often occurs at private parties (83.0%). In addition, a majority (64.5%) reported that underage drinking should be placed as a high priority compared to other crimes in their beat (high priority defined as a priority rating of 5 or higher out of 10 possible levels where 10 is the highest priority) (Table 2). Comparisons by year suggest that there is no statistical change in the percentage of officers who think underage drinking is a problem or that it most often occurs at private parties, though there is a noticeable decline in the percentage who think underage drinking is a problem in 2009 (45.9%) (Figure 2). No statistically significant change over time in the ranking of underage drinking among other crimes was found.

Figure 2. Belief that Underage Drinking is a Problem 2007 - 2009, in OPD



Across years, there is significant support for the SHO, as a vast majority (77.9%) indicated that the SHO is an effective tool at reducing underage drinking at private parties. There is some doubt around whether adults furnishing alcohol to minors is an issue that needs attention – 40% were undecided about whether it is a problem in their patrol area. Despite overall findings, over time, the belief that the SHO is an effective tool to reduce underage drinking has significantly declined among officers from 93.6% in 2007 to 62.2% in 2009, while there has been some variability in the idea that adults furnishing alcohol to minors is an issue in their patrol area (Figure 3). These findings may indicate less confidence in the use of SHO to reduce underage drinking, perhaps due to a greater experience in use of the tool but limited evidence demonstrating change in underage drinking behavior.

Figure 3. Attitudes Toward SHO Effectiveness and Perception of Furnishing Alcohol to Minors 2007 - 2009, in OPD



* Indicates statistically significant difference ($p < .05$)

Most believe that they will write SHO citations in appropriate situations, and most reported that penalties related to SHO were not too severe. Yearly comparisons suggest slight declines in the percentage of officers who say they will write SHO citations, though the decline is not statistically significant.

Table 1. Summary of Responses on Law Enforcement SHO Survey 2007 -2009, OPD

Item	Response	2007 (n=31)	2008 (n=27)	2009 (n=37)	All (n=95)
Before the training, were you aware of the SHO?*	Yes	46.7%	85.2%	97.3%	77.7%
	No	53.3%	14.8%	2.7%	22.3%
Underage drinking is a problem	Agree/Strongly agree	83.3%	81.5%	45.9%	68.1%
	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.0%	7.4%	24.4%	11.7%
	Undecided	16.7%	11.1%	29.7%	20.2%
Most underage drinking occurs at private parties	Agree/Strongly agree	83.9%	85.2%	80.5%	83.0%
	Disagree/Strongly disagree	6.5%	7.4%	11.2%	8.5%
	Undecided	9.6%	7.4%	8.3%	8.5%
Adult furnishing of alcohol to youth at private parties is a problem in my patrol area	Agree/Strongly agree	34.4%	65.4%	30.6%	41.8%
	Disagree/Strongly disagree	13.8%	11.5%	27.8%	18.6%
	Undecided	51.8%	23.1%	41.6%	39.6%
SHO is an effective tool for reducing underage drinking at private parties*	Agree/Strongly agree	93.6%	81.5%	62.2%	77.9%
	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.0%	3.7%	13.5%	6.3%
	Undecided	6.4%	14.8%	24.3%	15.8%
The penalty of a \$1,000 fine and/or up to six months in jail is too severe	Agree/Strongly agree	3.2%	3.8%	8.4%	5.4%
	Disagree/Strongly disagree	93.6%	84.7%	71.2%	82.8%
	Undecided	3.2%	11.5%	19.4%	11.8%
I anticipate problems or obstacles in enforcing the SHO*	Agree/Strongly agree	16.2%	26.9%	67.5%	39.4%
	Disagree/Strongly disagree	41.9%	15.4%	19.0%	25.5%
	Undecided	41.9%	57.7%	13.5%	35.1%

Item	Response	2007 (n=31)	2008 (n=27)	2009 (n=37)	All (n=95)
In the future I will write citations for violations of the SHO when appropriate	Agree/Strongly agree	100.0%	92.6%	75.7%	88.3%
	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	5.4%	2.2%
	Undecided	0.0%	7.4%	18.9%	9.5%
Today's training about the SHO was useful*	Agree/Strongly agree	100.0%	92.5%	86.5%	92.7%
	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	1.0%
	Undecided	0.0%	7.5%	10.8%	6.3%
The quality of the presentation was good	Agree/Strongly agree	83.9%	100.0%	83.8%	88.4%
	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	1.1%
	Undecided	16.1%	0.0%	13.5%	10.5%

* Indicates statistically significant difference (p<.05)

Table 2. Priority Rankings of Underage Drinking at Private Parties by Law Enforcement Officers 2007 -2009, OPD

Priority	2007 (n=31)	2008 (n=27)	2009 (n=37)	All (n=95)
1	0.0%	3.7%	8.3%	4.3%
2	6.7%	3.7%	13.9%	8.6%
3	0.0%	7.4%	16.7%	8.6%
4	16.7%	11.1%	13.9%	14.0%
5	20.0%	22.2%	8.3%	16.1%
6	10.0%	22.2%	19.4%	17.2%
7	20.0%	22.2%	2.8%	14.0%
8	10.0%	7.4%	5.6%	7.5%
9	10.0%	0.0%	5.6%	5.4%
10	6.7%	0.0%	5.6%	4.3%

Nearly two out of five (39.4%) officers stated that they anticipate problems/obstacles to SHO enforcement. Over the past three years, the percent of officers who anticipate problems using the SHO has increased drastically from only 16.2% in 2007 to 67.5% in 2009. This increase may be due to a greater experience with the use of SHO and associated problems with enforcement. In 2009, some of the reasons that officers reported enforcement could be problematic include:

- Difficulty gaining access into the house to assess the situation and gather evidence to support a violation
- Obtaining the necessary resources (i.e., number of officers) required to handle all of the tasks needed to gather evidence to support a violation, especially since many violations happen at peak hours
- Maintaining safety of both the officers and community while trying to gather evidence (e.g., breaking up a large party and ensuring no one is driving drunk, while trying to document the violation)
- Fear that civil actions will be taken against law enforcement due to perceived civil rights violations

Law enforcement officers were asked what types of alcohol and drug related citations or arrests they have made in the past year (Table 3). Over the years, public drunkenness, DUI (alcohol), and open container violations appear to be the most common among respondents. Social host violations appear to be very uncommon in comparison. Over time, a slight increase is seen in the number indicating that they issued a citation or made an arrest related to furnishing alcohol to a minor, with a slight decrease in use of the minor in possession of alcohol law from 2008 to 2009. Because these data are based on a sample of officers, these data may not be able to indicate true trends in law enforcement practices and further analyses of law enforcement data are warranted.

Table 3. Types of Citations/Arrests in Last Year as Reported by Law Enforcement Officers 2007-2009, OPD

	2007 (n=31)	2008 (n=27)	2009 (n=37)	All (n=95)
Furnishing alcohol to a minor	6.5%	3.7%	10.8%	7.4%
Minor in possession of alcohol	45.2%	51.9%	24.3%	38.9%
Open container	64.5%	59.3%	64.9%	63.2%
Noise abatement	9.7%	29.6%	13.5%	16.8%
Public drunkenness	67.7%	88.9%	75.7%	76.8%
Under the influence of a controlled substance	67.7%	63.0%	37.8%	54.7%
Disorderly conduct	22.6%	11.1%	10.8%	14.7%
DUI (alcohol)	71.0%	88.9%	70.3%	75.8%
DUI (drugs)	45.2%	48.1%	32.4%	41.1%
Social Host Violation	0.0%	0.0%	8.1%	3.2%
Alcohol sales to minor	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Drug possession	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Overall, responses across years were similar except in three instances:

- There is a significant increase in awareness of SHO among law enforcement prior to training,

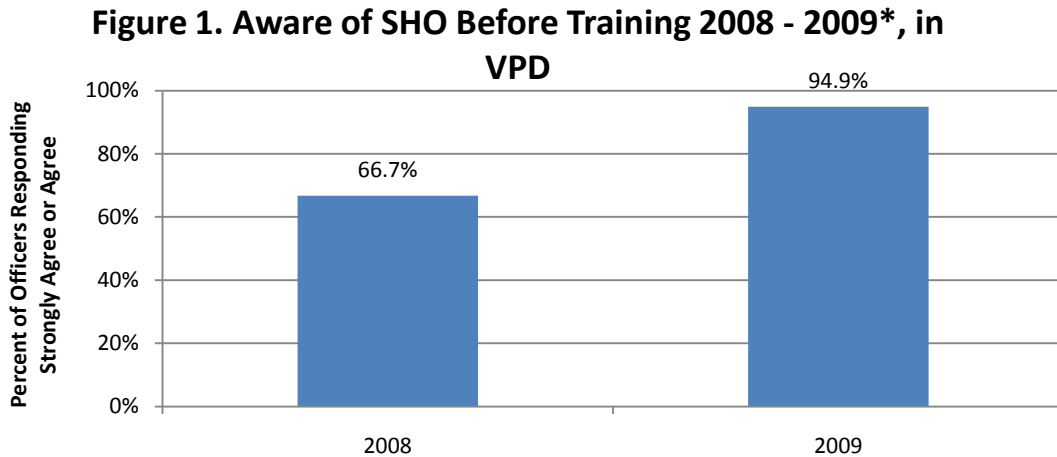
- Fewer are confident that the SHO is an effective tool to reduce underage drinking, and
- Greater perception of problems/obstacles associated with SHO enforcement.

In general, awareness of SHO by law enforcement has increased significantly since 2007. However, in 2009, fewer officers reported that underage drinking is a problem and that the SHO can help to reduce underage drinking. It is not clear whether officers report underage drinking is less of a problem now because SHO enforcement has been effective. It is possible that law enforcement believes that the effect of SHO enforcement is limited to underage drinking at private parties but not in other situations.

Lastly, a far greater number of officers indicated that they anticipate problems/obstacles with the enforcement of the SHO in 2009 than in years past. This increase may be due to greater experience with use of the SHO and more familiarity with the challenges associated with its enforcement.

Appendix B: Analysis of Law Enforcement Training Survey – Vista Station: San Diego County Sheriff's Department

Surveys administered to law enforcement at the Vista Station of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department after a SHO training conducted by NCPC were examined. Surveys collected in 2008 and 2009 were aggregated, and officer responses were also compared between both years (Table 1). Most officers were aware of SHO prior to the training (81.9%) though significantly more were aware in 2009 compared to the prior year (94.9% vs. 66.7%, respectively) (Figure 1).



* Indicates statistically significant difference ($p < .05$)

Across years, most deputies think underage drinking is a problem (88.9%) and that it most often occurs at private parties (90.3%). Deputies were asked to rank what level of priority underage drinking at private parties gets compared to other types of crimes on their beat. A majority (70.4%) of deputies reported that they thought underage drinking should be placed as a high priority compared to other crimes in their beat (high priority defined as a priority rating of 5 or higher out of 10 possible levels where 10 is the highest priority) (Table 2).

Attitudes about underage drinking as a problem, or that underage drinking often occurs at private parties, have not significantly changed from 2008 to 2009. No statistically significant change over time in the ranking of underage drinking among other crimes was found.

Table 1. Summary of Responses on Law Enforcement SHO Survey 2007 -2009, Vista Station

Item	Response	2008 (n=33)	2009 (n=39)	All (n=72)
Before the training, were you aware of the SHO?*	Yes	66.7%	94.9%	81.9%
	No	33.3%	5.1%	18.1%
Underage drinking is a problem	Agree/ Strongly agree	84.8%	92.3%	88.9%
	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	6.0%	5.1%	5.6%
	Undecided	9.2%	2.6%	5.5%
Most underage drinking occurs at private parties	Agree/ Strongly agree	87.8%	92.3%	90.3%
	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	6.1%	0.0%	2.8%
	Undecided	6.1%	7.7%	6.9%
Adult furnishing of alcohol to youth at private parties is a problem in my patrol area	Agree/ Strongly agree	64.7%	87.9%	70.9%
	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	9.1%	7.7%	8.3%
	Undecided	27.2%	15.4%	20.8%
SHO is an effective tool for reducing underage drinking at private parties	Agree/ Strongly agree	54.6%	71.8%	63.9%
	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	6.1%	2.6%	4.2%
	Undecided	39.3%	25.6%	31.9%
The penalty of a \$1,000 fine and/or up to six months in jail is too severe	Agree/ Strongly agree	15.2%	7.7%	11.1%
	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	78.8%	84.6%	82.0%
	Undecided	6.0%	7.7%	6.9%
I anticipate problems or obstacles in enforcing the SHO	Agree/ Strongly agree	33.3%	12.8%	22.3%
	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	30.3%	59.0%	45.8%
	Undecided	36.4%	28.2%	31.9%

Item	Response	2008 (n=33)	2009 (n=39)	All (n=72)
In the future I will write citations for violations of the SHO when appropriate	Agree/ Strongly agree	81.8%	89.5%	85.9%
	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Undecided	18.2%	10.5%	14.1%
Today's training about the SHO was useful	Agree/ Strongly agree	97.0%	100.0%	98.6%
	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Undecided	3.0%	0.0%	1.4%
The quality of the presentation was good	Agree/ Strongly agree	97.0%	100.0%	98.6%
	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Undecided	3.0%	0.0%	1.4%

* Indicates statistically significant difference (p<.05)

Table 2. Priority Rankings of Underage Drinking at Private Parties by Law Enforcement Officers 2007 -2009, Vista Station

Priority	2008 (n=33)	2009 (n=39)	All (n=72)
1	3.0%	0.0%	1.4%
2	3.0%	7.9%	5.6%
3	9.1%	5.3%	7.0%
4	15.2%	15.8%	15.5%
5	36.4%	21.1%	28.2%
6	12.1%	13.2%	12.7%
7	12.1%	21.1%	16.9%
8	3.0%	7.9%	5.6%
9	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
10	6.1%	7.9%	7.0%

There is significant support for the SHO, as a majority (63.9%) indicates that the SHO is an effective tool at reducing underage drinking at private parties. Additionally, most agreed that adults furnishing alcohol to minors is an issue that needs attention – 70.9% agreed that it is a problem in their patrol area. No

changes in attitudes about the effectiveness of SHO or whether adults furnishing alcohol to minors changed from 2008 to 2009 (Table 1).

Most respondents believe that they will write SHO citations in appropriate situations (85.9%) and most reported that penalties related to SHO were not too severe (82.0%). In addition, just over one in five deputies stated that they anticipate problems/obstacles to SHO enforcement. No differences in respondents from 2008 to 2009 were found in any of the above items.

Somewhat fewer deputies indicated that they anticipate problems/obstacles with the enforcement in 2009 (12.8%) than in 2008 (33.3%). This increase may be due to greater experience with the use of the SHO. In 2009, some of the reasons that deputies reported enforcement could be problematic include:

- Obtaining the necessary resources (i.e., number of deputies) required to handle all of the tasks needed to gather evidence to support a violation
- Maintaining safety of both the deputies and community while trying to gather evidence (e.g., breaking up a large party and ensuring no one is driving drunk, while trying to document the violation)
- Concerns that the District Attorney is not following up on cases

Law enforcement were asked what types of alcohol and drug related citations or arrests they have made in the past year (Table 3). For most citations and arrests, rates are similar across years or there is slight variability though it is not clear at this time whether changes are indicative of upward or downward trends, with the exception of one item. No one indicated that they completed a SHO citation in 2008, though in 2009 41.0% indicated that they did so. This may be due to increased awareness and focus on its use by the Sheriff's Department in Vista. However, because these data are based on a sample of deputies, these data may not be able to indicate true trends in law enforcement practices and further analyses of law enforcement data are warranted.

Table 3. Types of Citations Made in Last Year as Reported by Law Enforcement Deputies 2007-2009, Vista Station

	2008 (n=33)	2009 (n=39)	All (n=72)
Furnishing alcohol to a minor	15.2%	25.6%	20.8%
Minor in possession of alcohol	51.5%	35.9%	43.1%
Open container	48.5%	38.5%	43.1%
Noise abatement	21.2%	25.6%	23.6%
Public drunkenness	69.7%	89.7%	80.6%
Under the influence of a controlled substance	66.7%	82.1%	75.0%
Disorderly conduct	42.4%	41.0%	41.7%
DUI (alcohol)	66.7%	48.7%	56.9%
DUI (drugs)	57.6%	46.2%	51.4%
Social Host Violation	0.0%	41.0%	22.2%
Alcohol sales to minor	3.0%	0.0%	1.4%
Drug possession	3.0%	0.0%	1.4%

Overall, responses across years were similar except for one instance: awareness of SHO. In general, awareness of SHO by law enforcement has increased significantly since 2008. Most deputies are in support of its use, believe it is an effective tool, and few anticipate problems or obstacles in enforcing the SHO in the City of Vista.