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It's Easy for Underage Drinkers to Buy Alcohol Online

Underage drinkers who participated in a study to see if they could buy alcoholic beverages online were successful in 45% of attempts.

The study, conducted at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, recruited eight people, ages 18 to 20, to try to purchase wine, beer and other beverages online, according to Bloomberg News.

To keep participants on the right side of the law in case they got caught, each got a letter of immunity from the local district attorney.

The participants were instructed, for the purposes of the study, to lie about their age when filling out order forms. But if asked for age verification by a delivery person, they were to fess up and say they were not yet 21.

They placed orders at 100 Internet sites that sell the products, with most of the deliveries to be made by either FedEx or United Parcel Service. The U.S. Postal Service, by law, does not accept alcohol shipments.

According to the study, 45 of the orders were successfully made and received. Only 28 were rejected because the person making the order was found to be underage. The remaining orders did not go through because of technical glitches or because no one was home when delivery attempts were made.

David Jernigan, director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, said in a Bloomberg interview that the study showed how "insufficient" the age verification systems are.

"The bottom line is that alcohol regulation and enforcement are simply not keeping up with new technologies," Jernigan said.

The study's findings were published by the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*.

To learn more about Alcohol, Drugs and Youth, click here.

Source: David Colker, The Los Angeles Times