

Alcohol and other drugs

Anyone can talk to a lawyer for free at Tasmania Legal Aid.

To get free legal information call 1300 366 611, drop into our Hobart or Launceston office (no appointment necessary) or use the Legal Talk chat function on our website. We are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

A lawyer can listen to your story and help identify the next steps you can take.

Drug laws are complex. It is against the law possess, use, produce, sell, drive under the influence of alcohol or drive while an illegal drug can be detected in your body.

What are party drugs?

Party drugs are illegal drugs that are commonly used at social events and festivals rather than other settings. Some examples of party drugs are MDMA, Cocaine, Ketamine and LSD (Acid).

Drugs can alter your sense of reality and cause various physical side effects such as increased body temperature and dehydration.

Some people die from taking a party drug.

What could happen if I take a party drugs?

If you take illegal party drugs you could find yourself in trouble with the Police. You might receive a fine, lose your driver's licence, or even go to prison. Someone with a drug conviction may not able to visit some countries.

There is no quality control process for making party drugs. This means you don't know how strong the drug is and what other substances have been added to them. For example, ecstasy is sometimes made with drain cleaner or battery acid, and these can cause serious health problems and may even kill you.

For more information about this issue please see the [health direct website](#).

Text the effects is a drug information service via SMS. It provides information about the effects of drugs in a confidential and accessible way, any location, any time. Simply text the name of the drug you want to know about to **0439 tell me** (0439 835 563).

If I am under 18, can I drink alcohol?

You can drink at home if you have a responsible adult there with you. This could be your own parent or guardian. If you are going to someone else's house for a party, you must also have permission to drink from your parent or guardian.

The [Tasmania Police website](#) has more information on safe parties. The Police want to ensure that at the party:

- There is appropriate adult supervision of anyone under 18
- That food is also provided
- That the quantity and type of alcohol being drunk is reasonable.

Can I get in trouble for having a party?

If a party is **registered** Police will not interrupt unless someone such as a neighbour or concerned parent asks them to. This may be to investigate a complaint relating to the party being too noisy. We recommend that you register your party, that you let neighbours know and that you observe local council rules relating to playing loud music.

What about drinking and being under 18?

The law is there for your safety and the safety of the community. For any person under the age of 18 it is illegal to do any of the following:

- Drink alcohol in public
- Be found in possession of alcohol, even to hold it for someone else
- Give someone else who is not 18 years an alcoholic drink
- Provide a false name, address or age when requested by Police
- Have false ID (including someone else's ID – e.g. an older brother/sister).

When I turn 18 what is the law about alcohol?

Even when you turn 18 it is an offence to:

- Supply someone under 18 with a drink
- Allow someone to use your ID to buy a drink or enter into a licensed premise
- Drive a vehicle with more than the prescribed level of alcohol in your body. If you do not hold a full drivers licence you cannot have any alcohol in your body and drive.

You must also leave a licensed premise if you are asked to. You can be banned from a premise or an entire precinct (i.e. Hobart waterfront) for up to 6 months if you do not leave when asked to.

What the law about smoking?

You must be 18 years of age to smoke or use any tobacco product or buy any tobacco product. It is also illegal to buy tobacco products on behalf of someone who is under 18.

Smoking an illegal drug is against the law regardless of your age.

Is vaping legal?

It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to have, use or buy a vaporiser. Vaporisers are classified as smoking products and therefore all of the same rules apply to vaporisers as apply to cigarettes and other tobacco products.

If you are caught using a vape then a police officer may take it away from you, they can request your name and the names of your parents and the details of the person who gave you the vape. They can also give you a caution, tell your parents and give the person who gave it to you a fine.

Medical experts warn of the dangers of vaping or using an e-cigarette. It is illegal for anyone under 18 to buy an e-cigarette device. The current laws which allow someone to buy one only with a doctor's prescription to quit smoking. Vaping devices and substances bought online are particularly risky because their quality and safety is not guaranteed.

This is written for people who live in or who are affected by the laws of Tasmania, Australia. The law changes all the time – this information is not legal advice. If you have a legal problem, you should talk to a lawyer before making a decision about what to do.