

# FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What is Cobb Safe Neighborhoods/Safe Homes?

A partnership between Cobb Underage Drinking Task Force and area neighborhood associations (or network of neighbors); where neighborhood parents and other adults work together with law enforcement partners to prevent underage drinking and youth access to alcohol and other drugs; keeping youth, families and neighborhoods safe. It's a simple project designed to capitalize on interest expressed by neighborhoods and residents at the 2006 Cobb County Town Hall Meeting on Underage Drinking.

## 2. Why do we need Cobb Safe Neighborhoods/Safe Homes?

The social world youth face today is full of dangers, including underage drinking. Many of today's parents and families feel isolated and helpless while others may be unaware that their attitudes and beliefs actually contribute to dangerous environments for youth. Safe Neighborhoods/Safe Homes removes the parenting in isolation and empowers participating residents to stop the dangerous health and safety incidents resulting from underage drinking parties/gatherings! Youth deserve all of our efforts to help keep them and our neighborhoods safe.

## 3. What's in it for neighborhoods?

The Neighborhood Partnership Agreement offers an opportunity for neighborhood associations, or networks of neighbors, to publicly agree to follow simple yet effective safety principles and specific steps that will encourage and support safe neighborhood behaviors for residents. Neighborhood partners also assist in distributing information and collecting Safe Homes Agreements from residents. Declaration and recognition as a "Safe Neighborhood" is available for neighborhood partners meeting eligibility requirements.

## 4. What's in it for residents?

The Safe Homes Agreement offers an opportunity for residents to join together to help provide safer environments for neighborhood youth. It does not require a commitment of time or extra effort for already busy families. It provides an opportunity for a network of neighbors to publicly agree to follow simple yet effective safety principles and specific steps that will encourage and support safe and healthy environments for youth and creating safe homes and safe neighborhoods. Participants may register to receive 3 newsletters a year.

## 5. Okay, so I've joined the Safe Homes Network - Now What?

Good news - there's no volunteering, meetings to attend, or other work! Just honor the principles and follow the specific steps outlined in the Safe Homes Agreement, to be renewed annually. Talk with adults and youth in your home and neighborhood about the importance of signing and honoring the Agreement, and educate yourself and others about the case for social host ordinances. Refer other adults who you know, living within Cobb County, who might be interested in bringing Cobb Safe Neighborhoods/Safe Homes to their neighborhood - have them email [safehomes@CUDTF.org](mailto:safehomes@CUDTF.org) or call 404-223-9812 and visit [www.CUDTF.org](http://www.CUDTF.org) to learn more about Cobb County underage drinking problems, the case for social host ordinances, and other strategies being used to prevent underage drinking and youth access to alcohol.

## 6. How do I report underage drinking parties/illegal sales to minors?

You have several options. If you learn about an underage drinking party in advance, contact the property owner to advise them in case they are unaware; suggest they ask for police assistance to prevent the party, and/or call your local police precinct\* to request assistance for preventing an underage drinking party before it happens. To report parties already underway, call 911 or your local police precinct. To report retail outlets for illegal alcohol sales to minors; call 1-877-CHECK ID or 770-499-4719 at the Cobb County Sheriff's Office. Calls can be anonymous. Provide as much information as you can; exact location and address, the name of the property owner or retail outlet and any contact information for them, and any personal observations of underage drinking, retail alcohol sales to minor and/or other illegal activity.

*\* Neighborhood Safe Homes Coordinators should provide residents with the telephone number for their local police precinct. To find the phone number of your local police precinct, look in the government/blue pages of the phone book or search county/city websites.*

## **7. We don't allow alcohol/drugs in our home because of religious beliefs, so why should we sign the safe homes agreement?**

Even if you and your youth choose not to use alcohol or other drugs, youth come into contact with others who do use. Signing the Safe Homes Agreement can be a tool to help you help your youth limit their social exposure to underage drinking by others. Even if there are no youth living in your home, it is not only the underage drinker who is “at-risk”; there are dangerous second hand effects for by-standers and the community too. By joining the Safe Homes Network you will help establish a critical mass of neighbors who publicly share a set of common beliefs for actively preventing youth access to alcohol.

## **8. What about youth that choose to use alcohol/other drugs anyway?**

Cobb Safe Neighborhoods/Safe Homes CANNOT stop all youth from using alcohol and other drugs. Engaging parents and adults, neighbor-to-neighbor, CAN prevent underage drinking among neighborhood youth and their friends, and it CAN help set safe and healthy social norms for underage drinking prevention in neighborhoods and communities throughout Cobb County.

## **9. What if I think that youth should be allowed to drink alcohol if they are properly supervised?**

You are perfectly free to choose NOT to sign the Safe Homes Agreement. However, please think again, you may think you are preventing tragedy by serving alcohol and taking away car keys, but you are actually breaking the law and undermining the boundaries and values of other parents. According to Georgia Law (O.C.G.A. 3-3-23 & 3-5-5) parent's cannot give alcohol to their teen's friends who are under age 21, under any circumstances, even in their home, even with parents' permission. To learn more about laws and consequences, see *Adults Who Host Lose The Most* flyer and *The Case for Social Host Ordinances* Issue Brief posted @ [www.CUDTF.org](http://www.CUDTF.org).

## **10. Who will know I have signed the Safe Homes Agreement?**

Neighborhood association partners are asked to collect signed Safe Homes Agreements and record and report only the number of residents participating to the Cobb Underage Drinking Task Force, no personal resident information will be forwarded. However, neighborhood associations may choose to publish a list of residents participating in their Safe Homes Network to all neighbors, as a resource to participating families and as a means of encouraging resident participation so the neighborhood can be declared and publicly recognized as a “Safe Neighborhood”. Contact your neighborhood Safe Homes volunteer coordinator to find out who will know the participating Safe Homes residents in your neighborhood.

## **11. What if a resident signs, then violates the Safe Homes Agreement?**

The Safe Homes Agreement is voluntary and those who sign it are on their personal honor to abide by it, it is not a legally binding contract. Cobb Safe Neighborhoods/Safe Homes partners cannot guarantee the behavior of, nor accept responsibility for, the behavior of anyone. Residents in violation of underage drinking laws should be reported to proper law enforcement authorities and held accountable.

## **12. If I sign the Safe Homes Agreement, does it mean I cannot have or serve alcohol to adults in my home?**

No. Safe Homes is not designed to address legal adult alcohol consumption. Signing the agreement means only that you won't allow youth under age 21 to consume or have access to alcohol in your home or on property you control, and that you will provide secure storage for alcohol and other potentially hazardous items to prevent such access.