



ALCOHOL and OTHER DRUG POLICY

(Revised 07/2007)

General Statement

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute honors its role as an educational institution by establishing policies and guidelines that regulate the consumption of alcohol on campus and by developing pro-active alcohol and other drug awareness, educational and behavior change programs.

Rensselaer is committed to educational goals in this area. The Institute's aim is to develop an alcohol and other drug policy that is clear and consistent; to inform and educate individuals with regard to the policy and the risk factors associated with alcohol use or abuse; to create an environment that promotes low risk use, safety and individual accountability; and to maintain a healthy campus community where problems associated with alcohol and other drugs are minimal.

The overall philosophy of the Institute is that each individual member of the campus community is responsible for his/her own actions. When making decisions to consume beverage alcohol or to provide beverage alcohol to others, individuals must be mindful of the inherent consequences and risks involved. In addition, individuals are responsible for understanding and complying with applicable laws. The Institute will not be responsible for enforcing State and local laws, nor will it shield individuals from the legal consequences of their actions should they choose to violate these laws.

Rensselaer's policies and regulations are designed to encourage consistent and reasonable standards in our academic community. It is expected that all members will contribute to maintaining a positive and healthy environment by adhering to this policy.

I. THE LAW: New York State Statutes Regarding Alcohol Liability

- A. Penal law (260.20) - Unlawful dealing with a person to give, sell or cause to be given or sold alcohol to person under age 21 except if you are a parent or guardian or pursuant to educational curriculum.
- B. Alcohol Beverage Control Law (65, 65a, 65b, 65c, 65d) - Unlawful to: sell, give, deliver, cause, or permit a person under 21 to procure alcohol. No liability for refusal to sell or give unless discriminatory, misrepresent age of person under 21 to induce sale of alcohol; offer false I.D. by person under 21 to purchase alcohol; possess with intent to consume by person under 21. Exceptions are alcohol given pursuant to educational curriculum or by person's parent or guardian. Posting of signs is required by licensed seller.
- C. General Obligations Law - A 3rd party injured by an impaired or intoxicated person under age 21 has a right of action against any person who knowingly cause such impairment by unlawfully furnishing or assisting in procuring alcohol for the person under 21 years old. The Dramshop Act - if a person causes or contributes to procuring alcohol for any intoxicated person, an injured third party has a cause of action against the person who provided the alcohol.

- D. Vehicle & Traffic Laws - Operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs (Article 31 Section 1192 - 1196) - No person shall operate a motor vehicle while their ability to operate such motor vehicle is impaired by the consumption of alcohol.

Driving while intoxicated (DWI):

Definition: Operating a motor vehicle while having a .08 of one per centum or more by weight of alcohol in the blood as shown by chemical analysis of a person's blood, breath, urine or saliva.

Sanctions: Driving while intoxicated or while ability impaired by drugs are misdemeanor offenses and are punishable by a 6-months revocation of one's driver's license, a fine of not less than \$350.00 nor more than \$500.00, or by imprisonment in a penitentiary or county jail for not more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment. Subsequent convictions for DWI may constitute a Class E Felony and shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$500.00 nor more than \$5,000.00 or by a period of imprisonment as provided in the penal law, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Driving while ability impaired (DWAI):

Definition: Operating a motor vehicle while having .05 of one per centum or more by weight of alcohol in the blood as shown by the chemical analysis procedures described above.

Sanctions: Driving while ability impaired shall be a traffic infraction punishable by a 90-day suspension of driver's license, a fine of not less than \$250.00 nor more than \$350.00 or by imprisonment in a penitentiary or county jail for not more than 15 days, or by both such fine and imprisonment. A subsequent conviction within five years of a past infraction shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$350.00 nor more than \$500.00 or by imprisonment of not more than 30 days in a penitentiary or county jail or by both fine and imprisonment. Two or more subsequent convictions shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$500.00 nor more than \$1500.00, or by imprisonment of not more than 90 days in a penitentiary or county jail or by both fine and imprisonment.

(Note: Chemical test refusal will result in a 6-month revocation of driver's license and \$100.00 fine. Also, minors who refuse a chemical test will lose their license for 1 year or until they reach 21 years of age, whichever is the greater penalty.)

Zero Tolerance Law:

Effective November 1, 1996, this law states that it is illegal for someone under 21 to operate a motor vehicle with a BAC of .02 or higher. For a first offense a person will lose their license for six months and a second offense will lose their license until they become 21 or for a year, whichever is longer.

- E. Troy Code Sect. 4-1 states that possession of open containers of alcohol in public places or vehicles is illegal. A permit for certain places where beverage alcohol is sold is required.
- F. Troy Code of Ordinances Chapter 19 Article V Party Permit in general, states that whenever any residential dwellings used for a second event or party open to the general public or any segment thereof where: 1. an admission fee is charged or 2. alcohol, food, or beverages are sold or 3. a beer or liquor license is required by NY State, such shall require a party permit to be applied for by the owner of the property conducting the party.

II. Institute Regulations on Alcohol

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of alcohol is prohibited on Institute property or as part of any activity **sanctioned or** sponsored by the Institute. The administration at Rensselaer will not authorize events where drinking under the legal age, as determined by the State of New York will be knowingly permitted. Individuals and organizations who sponsor approved events involving beverage alcohol shall assume full responsibility and liability for the event and for the behavior of event participants **and attendees.**

In our continuing commitment to uphold the law and Institute policy, any Rensselaer recognized student organization found to have served alcohol to an

underage individual at any university sanctioned or sponsored activity (on or off campus) will, at minimum, be subject to a **two-semester** suspension. In addition, all organization alcohol privileges are subject to revocation while a group is under investigation and for the duration of the disciplinary process.

- A. Consumption of beverage alcohol on campus is permitted only by persons age 21 or older:
 - In the privacy of their rooms in residential facilities
 - At campus events where an alcohol permit has been obtained
 - In areas licensed for beer and wine service
- B. Possession or consumption of alcohol on campus by any person who is a student under age 21 is in violation of the New York State law and the Grounds for Disciplinary Action (GDA) and a violation of Human Resources & Institute Diversity (HR&ID) regulations if the person is an employee.
- C. Any person under age 21 who misrepresents her/his age in order to obtain alcohol has violated the GDA if that person is a student. If that person is an employee, policies of HR&ID have been violated.
- D. Any person who supplies or makes alcohol available to someone under age 21 has violated NYS statutes. If that person is a student, he/she has violated the GDA, or if that person is an employee, he/she has violated HR&ID policies.
- E. In accordance with State Law, no money may be charged for any event at which beverage alcohol is present unless a **license or** permit is obtained from New York State Liquor Authority.
- F. An alcohol permit must be obtained from the Alcohol Review Committee (c/o the Student Health Center) for any event occurring on Institute grounds at which alcohol is served or present. Exceptions are:
 - Licensed designated area of Rensselaer Union
 - Buildings leased or rented to faculty, staff or private **non-student** groups

An event is defined as any gathering for a specific purpose where there are more than **6** people present and alcohol is present.
- G. Campus events that are open to all students or where 20% or more of the attendees will be under age 21 may not be granted an alcohol permit.
- H. The consumption of alcohol or possession of an open container of alcohol is prohibited in all public or common areas on campus, including but not limited to corridors, stairwells, athletic facilities, elevators, lounges, classrooms, labs or outside campus areas (i.e. Quad) unless an alcohol permit has been obtained for a designated area. At no time may alcohol be consumed in potentially hazardous environments.
- I. Events shall not include any activity which encourages abusive use of alcohol.
- J. The serving or availability of alcohol at events being held in **or about** a predominantly ~~fresh~~ **freshmen** residential facility is prohibited.
- K. The presence, possession, or use of large quantities of alcohol on campus including but not limited to kegs, beer balls, or any other bulk containers of alcohol, is prohibited on Institute grounds with the exception of areas holding NYS license for beer and wine service.
- L. Beverages containing **grain alcohol** are prohibited.
- M. Alcohol will not be permitted at Rensselaer athletic events.

- N. Displays of any alcohol related items or materials; including but not limited to alcoholic beverage containers (empty or full), banners or signs; visible to the public, are not allowed in any residential facility.
- O. Off campus events: It is expected that all Rensselaer faculty, staff and students will comply with all governmental laws related to alcohol. Any Rensselaer group that plans an off campus event involving alcohol must adhere to the Rensselaer Alcohol and Other Drug Policy.
- P. Human Resources' policies for exempt and nonexempt staff are addressed in Section VI (Employee conduct) of the Human Resources Policy Manual (Revised 3/85). Under "Offenses Meriting Disciplinary Action", Number 2 states that "Possessing liquor, narcotics, weapons, or explosives on the campus without prior approval of an authorized representative of the Institute" is a first degree offense. The recommended disciplinary action for a first-degree offense may be discharge.

III. Procedures and Guidelines for On-Campus Events at Which Beverage Alcohol is Served

- A. Rensselaer requires that all groups obtain prior approval to serve beverage alcohol anywhere on campus except when the activity is in an area covered by a food service license and is part of normal or daily operations. Approval of alcohol permits is NOT automatic. Approval may be based on:
 1. The nature of both the event and the facility
 2. The capacity of the facility
 3. Demonstration by the sponsoring organization of its ability to comply with State and Institute regulations
 4. Nearby scheduled activities
 5. The number of underage (21) participants; if the percentage of underage attendees is 20% or higher, the function may not be approved.
 6. Where and how alcohol will be available
 7. The past history of event or sponsor
 8. Additional information may be request by the ARC
- B. An alcohol permit is required from ARC for any event where alcohol is served or available as stipulated in Section II F of this Alcohol Policy.
- C. Normally alcohol may be served at approved events:
 - On Monday through Thursday from 4 p.m. until midnight (11:00 p.m. in the Residence Halls)
 - On Friday from 4 p.m. until 2 a.m. Saturday (midnight in the Residence Halls)
 - On Saturday from 12 noon until 2 a.m. Sunday (midnight in the Residence Halls)
 - On Sunday from 12 noon until 12 midnight (11:00 p.m. in the Residence Halls)

EXCEPTIONS APPROVED ONLY BY ARC. The scope of the events at which alcohol will be available will be limited on Sunday through Thursday evenings. Events must be limited to FOUR (4) hours or less in duration.
- D. The maximum amount of alcohol allowed at an event is calculated as follows: One serving per person over 21 per hour, not to exceed four hours.
- E. Applications for an alcohol permit must be completed and submitted to the ARC c/o Student Health Center at least FIVE (5) days in advance of the function. If you are using **Sodexo** the request must be turned in **TWENTY-FIVE (25)** days in advance of the function. **APPLICANTS NOT ADHERING TO THESE GUIDELINES MAY NOT BE APPROVED.**

- F. Events where alcohol will be sold or admission is charged will require a New York State permit. Therefore applications must be submitted to the ARC TWENTY-FIVE (25) days in advance of the event.
- G. The individual requesting or signing the application for an alcohol permit must be age 21 or older. In the Residence Halls, the person requesting the permit must be the room/apartment occupant.
- H. Permits must be picked up before and displayed during the event.
- I. Advertising of the event must not imply that the event is for the purpose of consuming alcohol and may not be displayed before the permit is obtained. No specific mention of alcohol is allowed in the advertising. The words "beverages" and "refreshments" are acceptable.
- J. At any event where alcohol is available, a non-alcoholic beverage (other than water) will be equally and continuously accessible and available.
- K. Alcohol may not be served at any event unless food is also served. The food should include items high in protein and carbohydrates.
- L. The sponsor or host is responsible for implementing reasonable measures to ensure that alcohol is not served or made available to persons under age 21 or who are intoxicated. Sponsors are encouraged to use only servers trained via a certified server intervention training program (e.g. TIPS, The Training for Intervention Procedures by Servers of Alcohol). Contact the ARC for training information.
- M. The server(s) of alcohol will be sober and not consume alcoholic beverages during the event.
- N. Guests will not be allowed to bring additional alcohol to an event. The only alcohol permitted for consumption is that specified on the ARC permit.
- O. "BYO" events must be stated as such on the request for an alcohol permit. If approved, it is the responsibility of the sponsoring individual or group to comply with quantity guidelines set forth by Rensselaer's alcohol policy and to allow only those who are 21 or older to bring the alcohol.
- P. Positive proof of age is required at any event at which alcohol is served and or consumed. No licensee, or agent, or employee of such licensee shall accept as written evidence of age by any such person for the purchase of any alcoholic beverage, any documentation other than: (i) a valid driver's license or non-driver identification card issued by the commissioner of motor vehicle, the federal government, any United States territory, commonwealth or possession, the District of Columbia, a state government within the United States or a provincial government of the dominion of Canada, or (ii) a valid passport issued by the United States government or any other country, or (iii) an identification card issued by the armed forces of the United States.
- Q. The serving or availability of alcohol must be limited to a single designated area. Consumption of alcohol is only permitted in the approved area designated for the event.

IV. Specific Area Policies for Alcohol

A. Residence Halls

1. Only those individuals of legal drinking age (21) may possess alcohol in the privacy of their rooms. If more than six (6) people are present, an alcohol permit must be obtained from the ARC.
2. Kegs, beer balls or bulk containers of any sort (both empty and full) are not allowed in residence facilities.
3. Displays of any alcohol related items or materials visible to the public, including but not limited to alcohol beverage containers (empty or full), banners or signs, are not allowed in any residence facility.
4. The consumption of alcohol or possession of an open container of alcohol is prohibited in all public or common areas in the residence halls including but not limited to, stairwells, hallways, lounges, etc.
5. Due to the nature of finals week and our belief that the hall environment should be conducive to study during that period, no alcohol permits will be granted in the Residence Halls or the surrounding areas during finals week (including reading days).

B. Residence Halls - Group Living

Groups living in the Residence Halls can obtain alcohol permits for parties (more than 6 people) if the group meets the following conditions:

1. The group is self insured with the appropriate level of liability insurance. The insurance coverage must be approved by Rensselaer's Office of Risk Management.
2. The group must be recognized by Rensselaer.
3. The group must have a written Group Residence Agreement with Rensselaer.
4. The group has agreed to be bound by any alcohol and party policies that have been developed by a governing master organization such as the IFC or Panhellenic Council (or other similar organization) and have been approved by Rensselaer.

C. Rensselaer Union

1. The serving of beer and wine to persons 21 or older will be restricted to designated areas of the Rensselaer Union.
2. The purchase of beer or wine in the designated area shall be limited to a single serving container per person with legal ID.
3. Any registered event/activity/function held in the Rensselaer Union where alcohol will be available must be approved by the ARC and be accompanied by an alcohol permit.
4. Management of the Rensselaer Union and the Executive Board will review policies and guidelines and recommend appropriate changes to the President or his/her designee in consultation with the ARC.

D. Sage Faculty/Staff Dining Hall

1. Special events where alcohol will be served will comply with Section III of the Institute Alcohol and Other Drug Policy.
2. Management of Faculty/Staff Dining Hall will review policies and guidelines and recommend appropriate changes to the Director of Business and Auxiliary Services. Changes to the policies may be implemented upon consultation with the President or his/her designee and the ARC.

- E. Fraternities and Sororities hosting a social event at which alcohol is served at a location not designated as an Institute owned or leased property.

Fraternity and sorority sponsored events are also defined as any event at which 6 or more students of the same organization are present and an event in which alcohol is served.

1. Fraternities and Sororities are subject to the following policies and guidelines established by the Institute and/or consistent with Interfraternity Council or Panhellenic Council or national body or NIC policies and regulations, whichever is most restrictive;
 - i. No distilled spirits are allowed
 - ii. Non-alcoholic beverages must be made available by the host organization
 - iii. Alcoholic beverages may **not** be purchased or brought into the event in any quantity exceeding the *one drink per person 21 or over per hour*
 - iv. All events are restricted to a designated number of invited guests and not to exceed the legal limit of persons allowed in a facility or its common area, whichever is most restrictive
 - v. Open social events are prohibited (An open social event is defined as any event for which no invitation is given and/or general advertising is used)
 - vi. Any event at which alcohol is present,
 - a. must be **BYO and**
 - b. BYO is restricted to only those 21 or over
 - vii. Any event at which 6 or more members of one organization are present and alcohol is being served must be a registered and approved event by the Assistant Dean of Students, Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs. Event registration must meet the following criteria:
 - a. Hosting organization name
 - b. Date, time and location of event including the length of the event
 - c. Process used to notify neighbors
 - d. Designated contact person, cell phone number
 - e. Membership list
 - f. Invitation list
 - g. Confirmed attendance list differentiating 21 and over and under 21 attendees
 - h. Hand stamp or wrist band for attendees 21 or over
 - i. Personal identification required to verify date of birth
 - j. Written procedure used to distribute alcoholic beverages to those who BYO and 21 or over
2. On campus events at which alcohol will be served are regulated by Institute policy, Section III.

V. THE LAW: Statutes Regarding Other Drugs

New York State Public Health Law. It is a violation of the Public Health Law in New York for a person to sell or possess a hypodermic needle without a doctor's written prescription, to grow marijuana or knowingly allow it to be grown without destroying it (Class A misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in a local penitentiary), and to manufacture, sell or possess with intent to sell, an imitation controlled substance (Class A misdemeanor; second offense in 5 years is a Class E felony punishable by a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 4 years in state prison). It is also a violation to inhale any glue that releases toxic vapors or fumes. Any person who sells glue

for this purpose is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. The Public Health Law also provides that any private vehicles, boat or plane that has been or is being used to transport a controlled substance can be seized by the police or forfeited under the law.

New York Vehicle and Traffic Law. The rules and penalties for drinking and driving also apply to driving a motor vehicle while a person's ability is impaired by the use of a drug.

New York Penal Law. The Penal Law contains exhaustive lists of various controlled substances, specific types of offenses, and sanctions ranging from a fine of not more than \$100 to imprisonment for life. Examples of crimes under New York law include loitering with the intent to use drugs, appearing in public under the influence of drugs, using or possessing drug paraphernalia, and selling or possessing actual controlled substances. The Penal Law provides for a variety of sanctions depending on the offense.

The severity of the sanction depends on amount and intent. Persons convicted of a drug offense in New York may be sentenced to any one of the following: a conditional discharge that may include any amount and type of community service that the sentencing court deems appropriate, probation, shock probation which is a combination of jail time and probation (60 days plus up to 3 years probation for a misdemeanor; 6 months plus up to 5 years probation for a felony); intermittent imprisonment, which may include weekends and/or work Saturdays; or straight jail time.

Federal Law. Federal drug laws parallel New York State drug laws in many respects. For example, it is a Federal offense to manufacture, distribute or possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance or a counterfeit controlled substance. As under the New York Penal code, any property associated with the unlawful handling of controlled substances may be forfeited by the authorities. Federal Law also provides that a person age 18 or older who distributes a controlled substance to a person under 21 years of age may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment and/or fine of up to twice the amount authorized for distribution to a person over 21.

Sanctions of Special Note. A person convicted of any Federal or state offense involving possession of a controlled substance are ineligible to receive any or all Federal benefits (e.g., social security, student loans) for up to one year. If the offense involves distribution of a controlled substance, the guilty person could be ineligible for any or all Federal benefits for up to 5 years.

There are both Federal laws and New York State laws specifically dealing with the distribution or manufacturing of controlled substances in or near schools or colleges. For example, Federal law provides that a drug offense committed within 1,000 feet of school property, including universities, is punishable by a term of imprisonment and a fine of up to twice the amount authorized for the same offense committed away from school property.

VI. Institute Regulations on Other Drugs

The use, consumption, possession, sale, manufacture or transfer of any illegal drug or controlled substance (so defined by state or federal law) by any student or employee of the Institute for which the individual does not have a legal license or valid prescription, is strictly prohibited. Rensselaer is an educational institution and not a law enforcement agency, and therefore does not apply sanctions of the law. However, Rensselaer will not disregard the law and will not shield individuals from the legal consequences of their actions should they violate the law. In addition, individuals who have violated the law are also subject to disciplinary action.

Students will be disciplined according to the current Rensselaer Handbook, faculty according to the current Handbook for Academic Staff, and staff according to the current HR&ID Policy Manual.

VII. Policy Enforcement

- A. Adherence to these policies on alcohol and other drugs shall be the individual and personal responsibility of each member of the student body, staff, faculty or administration of the Institute.
- B. Direct responsibility and accountability for the enforcement of these policies shall rest with students, staff, faculty or administrators of the Institute who participate in the arrangement, sponsorship, supervision or organization of on-campus Rensselaer sponsored events.
- C. Enforcement methods for events as specified in Section III of this policy will be determined by the ARC in accordance with established Institute disciplinary policies.
- D. Enforcement methods for specific areas as designated in Section IV will be developed by its respective management. The procedures will be reviewed for consistency by the ARC.
- E. The responsibility of enforcement of the Institute Alcohol and Other Drug Policy resides with the President or his/her designee.

VIII. Violations/Sanctions

- A. Violations of the Alcohol and Other Drug Policy by any employee of the Institute constitutes an "offense meriting disciplinary action". Person(s) shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including possible discharge.
- B. Violations of the Alcohol and Other Drug Policy by any student shall constitute a violation of the Grounds for Disciplinary Action. Person(s) shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Institute.
- C. Possible sanctions are outlined for students in the current Rensselaer Handbook, for staff in the current Human Resources Policy Manual, and faculty in the current Handbook for Academic Staff.

IX. Institute Alcohol and Other Drug Review Committee

The alcohol review committee has the following membership, operating parameters and responsibilities:

- A. Membership: Two students, two staff, two faculty and one chair; for a total membership of seven.
- B. Operating Parameters
 - 1. Quorum: One student, one faculty, one staff and one chairperson
 - 2. Reporting to: Institute President or Designee (i.e. Vice President for Student Life)
 - 3. Meetings: six meetings annually; in or around September, October, November, February, March and April

4. Terms of committee appointment: faculty and staff committee members shall be appointed for two years and student members shall be appointed annually
- C. Responsibilities: Representatives of the Student Health Center will assume primary responsibility for 1 – 6 but will bring before the Alcohol Review Committee exceptional cases and considerations. The Alcohol Review Committee will assume primary responsibility for 7 and 8.
1. developing procedures and guidelines for events where alcohol is present
 2. determining criteria for approving events at which alcohol is present
 3. reviewing applications for events at which alcohol is present
 4. soliciting and accepting reports from individuals and groups about violations, complaints and policy effectiveness
 5. referring violators into the judicial system
 6. developing enforcement procedures in consultation with the Vice President for Student Life
 7. reviewing policies and recommendation for changes in policy for the campus community
 8. Promoting and coordinating alcohol awareness and educational and behavioral change programs with the campus community which may include the following components:
 - a. student workshops for the general student population, residence hall staffs, representatives of Greek organizations, other student groups and organizations and faculty and staff which aim to develop new procedures for overcoming peer pressure to consume alcohol and other drugs
 - b. workshops to increase student understanding of the short and long-term effects of alcohol and other drug abuse
 - c. encourage students to participate in the programs and activities which take place during weeks such as Alcohol and Health Awareness Week
 - d. special educational workshops for students and their families during each Fall semester (e.g. S.O. and Family Weekend)
 9. Assist the efforts of Rensselaer Greeks and other student groups and organizations to develop and evaluate systematic and innovative party procedures and polices regarding the low-risk serving of alcohol (e.g. determining the impact of specific environmental determinants on alcohol consumption, refining existing server intervention training programs and sober driver programs)

Rensselaer’s Alcohol & Other Drug Education Prevention Program

The Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 requires that we distribute to all students the campus alcohol and other drug (AOD) policy, as well as the laws and health risks regarding AOD use and resources on campus and in the community. Contact the Health Education Office at 276-6287 or healthed@rpi.edu for more information.

Health Risks

There is no “safe” use of alcohol for students under 21. Engaging in “recreational” drug use or “social” drinking could have serious mental health, physical and/or legal consequences. Alcohol and other drugs are toxic to the body and if abused can have catastrophic consequences on one’s health. Some drugs, such as crack, are so toxic that even one experimental use can be fatal.

Alcohol is the number one date rape drug. When it comes to drugs and alcohol, what you don't know can not only hurt you, but it can kill you.

Rensselaer believes that the better informed you are about the health risks associated with the use of illicit drugs and the abuse of alcohol, the more likely you are to avoid these substances altogether or to at least seek help if you become the victim of a chemical dependence. Therefore, the following is a summary of the various health risks associated with alcohol abuse and the use of specific types of drugs. This summary is not intended to be an exhaustive or final statement of all possible consequences to health of substance abuse, but rather is intended to increase your awareness of the grave risks involved in this kind of behavior.

Alcohol Use and Abuse – Alcohol is the most widely used and abused drug in the United States. Alcohol consumption has acute effects on the body and causes a number of marked changes in behavior. Even low doses significantly impair the judgment and coordination required to drive a vehicle safely, increasing the likelihood that the driver will be involved in an accident. Low to moderate doses of alcohol also increase the incidence of a variety of aggressive acts, including spouse and child abuse, as well as dangerous risk-taking behavior. Moderate to high doses of alcohol cause marked impairments in higher mental functions, severely altering a person's ability to learn and remember information. Very high doses cause respiratory depression and death. If combined with other depressants of the central nervous system, lower doses of alcohol can be fatal.

Alcohol-related automobile crashes are the number one cause of death among people ages 15 through 24. Furthermore, approximately 50 percent of all youthful deaths from drowning, fires, suicide, and homicide are alcohol-related.

Repeated use of alcohol can lead to physical and psychological dependence. Dependent persons who suddenly stop drinking are likely to suffer withdrawal symptoms, including severe anxiety, tremors, hallucinations, and convulsions. Alcohol withdrawal can be life-threatening. Long-term consumption of large quantities of alcohol, particularly when combined with poor nutrition, can also lead to permanent damage to vital organs such as the brain and the liver. Mothers who drink alcohol during pregnancy may give birth to infants with fetal alcohol syndrome. These infants have irreversible physical abnormalities and mental retardation. In addition, research indicated that children of alcoholic parents have an increased risk of becoming alcoholics themselves.

Use of Illicit Drugs – Drugs interfere with the brain's ability to take in, store, and synthesize information. They distort perception, which can lead users to harm themselves or others. Drug use also affects sensation and impairs memory. In addition to these general effects, specific health risks associated with particular types of drugs are discussed below.

Rensselaer Resources for Help

Student Health Center: 276-6287

The Student Health Center is open Monday through Friday 8:00 am – 6:00 pm and Saturday and Sunday 1:00 - 5:00 pm when classes are in session and Monday through Friday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm during the summer. Call for an appointment.

Counseling Center: 276-6479

The Counseling Center, located in the Student Health Center. Is open Monday through Friday 8:30 - 5:00 when classes are in session and mornings only during the summer. They offer assistance on any issue that affects Rensselaer students.

Health Education: 276-6287

Contact Health Education for information about alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, safer sex, nutrition, stress, wellness or any other related topics. Located in the Student Health Center along with the campus' Wellness Resource Library.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 276-6287

AA meetings are held on campus every Monday night. There are also many off-campus meetings available. Call Health Education for details.

Community Resources for Help

Hudson-Mohawk Recovery Center: 272-3918

HMRC is a comprehensive outpatient alcoholism evaluation and treatment center located at 16 First Street in downtown Troy.

They are open Monday through Thursday 8:30am - 9:00pm and Fridays 8:30am - 5:00pm.

Capital EAP – 462-6531

Capital EAP is the Employee Assistance Program for use by faculty and staff and their families.

NATIONAL HOTLINES

NCA INFORMATION LINE: 1-800-NCA-CALL

The National Council on Alcoholism (NCA) provides referral services to families and individuals seeking help with an alcohol or other drug problem.

PRIDE DRUG INFORMATION HOTLINE: 1-800-241-9746

The Parent's Resource Institute for Drug Education (PRIDE) refers concerned parents to parent groups in their state or local area, provides telephone consultations and referral to emergency health centers, and maintains a series of drug information tapes that callers can listen to at no charge after 5:30p.m.

NIDA HOTLINE: 1-800-622-HELP

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) provides a confidential information and referral line that directs callers to cocaine abuse treatment centers in the local community. Free materials on drug use are also distributed upon request.

For more information please call the Health Education Office at 276-6287 or healthed@rpi.edu.