

Alcopops and Energy Drinks containing Alcohol


NEW LEMONADE




**mike's hard
pomegranate
lemonade™**

Mike's signature hard lemonade combines with juicy pomegranate, and subtle notes of berry, cherry, cranberry for a refreshing blend perfect for any social occasion.


Flavored Malt Beverages

- ▶ “Alcopops”
 - ▶ What are they?
 - ▶ How are they marketed?
 - ▶ How are they classified by the MLCC?
 - ▶ What is the impact on our prevention efforts?
 - ▶ What are local coalitions doing?
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What are they?

- ▶ Sweetened alcoholic beverages that are usually fruity, sweet, and resemble soda pop. They come in flavors like grape, mango, raspberry, orange, pineapple, lime, and pomegranate.
 - ▶ Common brands are Bacardi Silver, Mike's Hard Lemonade, Skyy, Smirnoff Ice, Zima and Parrott Bay.
 - ▶ Contain 5% alcohol, roughly the same as beer
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How are they marketed?

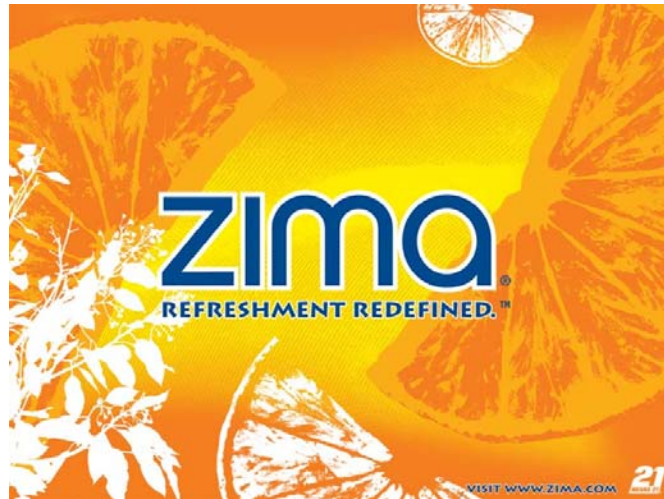
- ▶ While the industry claims they are marketed to adult women, about a third of teenage girls age 12–18 and one fifth of boys have tried alcopops. (marininstitute.org)
 - ▶ Underage girls drink alcopops more than any other alcoholic beverages.
 - ▶ Websites are fun, light, cheery and interactive with games and custom party invites.
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How are they classified by the MLCC?

- ▶ Alcopops are classified as “beer”, thus taxed at a rate of roughly 9 cents per gallon, versus “spirits”, taxed at roughly \$1.50 per gallon.
 - ▶ Alcopops are distilled starting with beer, then filtering out all the color, taste, and much of the alcohol, leaving only water.
 - ▶ Alcohol, flavors, and sweeteners are added, and the product is billed as a “malt beverage”... due to the “beer” base!
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Mike's Hard Lemonade's "Malt Beverage" Ad slogans

- ▶ "Sweet, sour and in between, Mike's has got a flavor for just about every taste bud and occasion. A delicious juicy beverage spiked with alcohol in an icy bottle, now that's a combination"!
 - ▶ "Tastes like top shelf without having to reach: mike's premium malt cocktails®. They're refreshingly real tasting and ready to drink. It's not so much that you're lazy, but that you don't think there's anything wrong with enjoying the simple conveniences in life".
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What is the impact on prevention efforts?

- ▶ Alcopops contribute to underage drinking because they don't taste, smell, or look like alcohol.
 - ▶ They serve as a transition between soft drinks and alcoholic beverages.
 - ▶ They are easy to conceal and “go down easy”
 - ▶ They are marketed as “light and refreshing” and encourage greater consumption than “heavy” beers
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Alcohol Energy Drinks: What Are They?

- ▶ High-caffeine alcoholic beverages
- ▶ They contain a higher alcohol content than beer (8%)
- ▶ Sugary taste masks the higher-than-beer alcohol taste
- ▶ Two main distributors are SPARKS (MillerCoors Brewing) and ROCKSTAR 21
- ▶ Numerous small vendors are entering the market




How are they classified?

- ▶ Like alcopops, alcohol energy drinks are classified as beer.
- ▶ They are distilled much like alcopops, only in addition to sugars and flavors, high amounts of caffeine are added with the alcohol
- ▶ SPARKS has slightly more caffeine per ounce than coffee
- ▶ SPARKS claims they are not an energy drink: “Sparks is a caffeinated alcohol beverage. It is not an energy drink and not marketed or sold as an energy drink, and there is no non-alcoholic version of Sparks”. www.sparks.com However...if it walks like a duck...



How are they marketed?

- ▶ Viral or “seemingly” grassroots marketing campaigns behind the drinks are clearly designed to appeal to young, often underage drinkers.
 - ▶ Alcohol producers promote close association with energy drinks by mimicking their containers, including size, shape, and graphics.
 - ▶ This raises troubling questions, given the dramatic rise in popularity of nonalcoholic energy drinks with children as young as age 12 and the potential risk of mixing alcohol with caffeine.
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Who makes these products?



What is the impact on our Youth?

- ▶ Combining alcohol with energy drinks is potentially harmful. Aside from the issue of irresponsible marketing that appeals to youth, the high-caffeine content of these drinks masks the effects of the high alcohol content, which can cause users to not recognize how impaired they actually are.
- ▶ Youth are at risk because clerks, retailers, and parents have difficulty differentiating between popular non-alcoholic energy drinks and the alcoholic energy drinks being sold.



Which Energy Drink contains alcohol?



Sparks...Off the Market?

- ▶ The Wall Street Journal reported MillerCoors was taking Sparks off the market November, 2008
- ▶ MillerCoors is actually just removing the caffeine, not removing the drink altogether


December 2009




Actions that McRud is taking

- ▶ McRud is submitting a resolution to ban Alcohol Mixed with Energy Drinks (AmED). The document mentions:
 - ▶ the target audience of the drinks,
 - ▶ the experiential effects of the drinks (reducing signs of intoxication),
 - ▶ the consequences of consumption (higher prevalence of alcohol-related consequences).
- ▶ Anheuser-Busch's lead of voluntarily discontinuing production of these products.

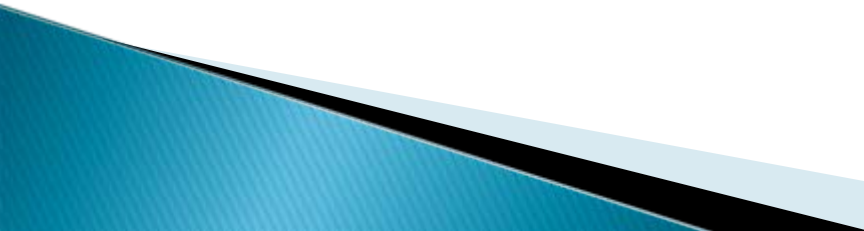
Action on alcopops by McRUD

- ▶ Resolution to classify alcopops as a mixed spirit drink by defining the way that alcopops are made
 - ▶ Amount of alcohol by volume
 - ▶ Presentation to MLCC
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Actions for Coalitions

- ▶ Adopt and develop resolutions from your coalition.
 - ▶ Go to MLCC hearings and speak on behalf of the resolutions.
 - ▶ Get the word out to others by educating them, and encouraging them to get involved and speak.
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Michigan Prevention Association

- ▶ Preventionists can join the Michigan Prevention Association.
 - ▶ Membership organization for those working in prevention.
 - ▶ Unites prevention advocates across disciplines to create a large, vocal constituency on behalf of prevention efforts.
 - ▶ Membership open to volunteers, professionals, students, and others from all fields, (including health, substance abuse prevention, law enforcement, criminal justice)
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MPA benefits

- ▶ Newsletter and advocacy listserve training
 - ▶ Advocacy training and support
 - ▶ Access to an inter-disciplinary network of preventionists
 - ▶ Opportunity to speak in one voice
 - ▶ Reduced rates for meetings and conferences
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