



September 8, 2017

24 Bethel Residents Charged with Selling Alcohol Without a License

On September 7, 2017, the Office of Special Prosecutions charged 24 defendants for allegedly selling alcohol without a license in Bethel, a Class A Misdemeanor. The charges resulted from an undercover operation led by troopers from the Western Alaska Alcohol and Narcotics Team (WAANT).

In 2015 and 2016, law enforcement officers in Bethel made 50 undercover alcohol purchases from individuals who lacked a license to sell alcohol. Forty-seven of the alleged illegal alcohol sales involved on-duty cab drivers. In the majority of the alleged incidents, a cab driver sold an undercover officer a single 750ml bottle of R&R Whisky for \$50.

Based on these allegations, the State filed charges against 18 cab drivers, including drivers from Quayana Cab Company, Kusko Cab, Inc., Alaska Cab Company, and Taxi Cab Company. The Quayana Cab Company was also charged as a result of these sales, as were several individuals who are alleged to have worked with the cab drivers to illegally sell alcohol.

In addition, a former night-manager at the Tundra Suites motel was charged with two counts of selling alcohol without a license for allegedly selling alcohol to an undercover officer who was staying at the motel.

Alaska law requires individuals who sell alcohol to possess a valid license issued by the Alcohol Beverage Control Board (ABC Board). The ABC Board vets applicants, inspects facilities, and insures that servers are properly educated on Alaska's alcohol laws.

The maximum penalty for a person convicted of selling alcohol without a license is one year in jail and a \$25,000 fine. The maximum penalty for a business convicted of selling alcohol without a license is a \$500,000 fine.

The State's charges are not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Under the sentencing law, the actual sentence imposed will be based upon the seriousness of the offenses and the prior criminal history, if any, of the defendant.

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