

Out-of-Home Alcohol Advertising



Everyone, regardless of age, is exposed to out-of-home alcohol advertisements, almost as soon as they walk out the door. The connection between youth exposure to alcohol ads and underage drinking is well-documented. The more ads kids see, the more likely they are to drink.¹

The ad industry term “out-of-home advertising” has largely replaced the term “outdoor advertising.” Advertisers are no longer just using billboards and other signs located outside; ads are also now placed indoors. Out-of-home advertising includes various types of promotions located outside, such as on street furniture and vehicles such as buses and trucks. Out-of-home advertisements that are indoors include video networks in subways and grocery stores, commercials before movies, and digital ads in airports, malls, and bars.

- In 2008, advertisers spent \$6.99 billion on outdoor advertising.²
- Historically, the alcohol industry has been one of the largest purchasers of outdoor advertising.³
- Money spent on high-tech, out-of-home advertisements such as digital billboards, video networks, and digital ads on buses was expected to grow to more than \$2.65 billion in 2009.⁴
- Advertisers have increasingly recognized that outdoor advertisements deliver a mass audience and reach consumers who are not exposed to newspapers or television news.⁵
- Transit advertising is a particularly attractive medium. Research from New York City describes transit passengers as a captive audience; ads takes advantage of the proximity to other riders:

*Participants in focus groups in New York City have said they welcome advertising in subway cars because the advertisements help them avoid uncomfortable eye contact with other riders and provide something to look at during trips.*⁵

- One study in Central Harlem, New York, found many ads near schools, churches, and playgrounds. The authors concluded that “predominantly Black neighborhoods continue to face high exposure to outdoor alcohol advertising, including around sites at which youth congregate.”⁶
- Another study of alcohol ads near Chicago schools found that “exposure to outdoor alcohol advertising around schools is associated with subsequent youth intentions to use alcohol” even among sixth-grade nonusers of alcohol.⁷
- Most major U.S. cities currently ban alcohol advertising on public transit.
- Local and state governments can enact laws to reduce youth exposure to alcohol advertising on billboards and other out-of-home media.



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Bottom Line: With emerging technologies, out-of-home alcohol advertising is going high-tech, but it's not inevitable or acceptable. Communities can hold the alcohol industry accountable and enact, strengthen, and enforce policies that prevent youth overexposure to alcohol advertising.

Please visit www.MarinInstitute.org to download our report: Out-Of-Home Alcohol Advertising: A 21st-Century Guide to Effective Regulation.

References

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