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Police on lookout for fake ID use

By Matt Bender
 Emerald Reporter

Police say they have begun to crack down on University students who misrepresent their age at campus-area bars and stores because the use of fake identification to obtain alcohol is a widespread problem.

Sgt. Dennis Baker, the Eugene police department's campus liaison, said the use of fake IDs in the campus area has reached epidemic proportions.

"We're going to put more effort into enforcing the IDs laws," Baker said. "It has become a big problem around campus."

Baker cited the confiscation of more than 130 IDs from one campus bar fall term as an example of the widespread use of false IDs. During the past month EPD has cited about 10 to 15 students a week for using IDs that are either fake or don't belong to them.

"Students may think it is a game to sneak into a bar and get alcohol," he said. "But if you are over 18, it goes on your criminal record, and you are taking a real risk to your career."

If a student uses someone else's ID to get alcohol, the student can be cited for minor falsely representing age and misuse of a driver's license, Baker said.

People using altered driver's licenses to buy alcohol can be charged with minor falsely representing age, altering a driver's license and forgery, Baker said. A person who uses another person's birth certificate to obtain identification can be charged with false swearing, falsely applying and forgery.

In addition to getting cited by EPD, students using fake ID can be charged under Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles statutes. DMV has the authority to suspend offenders' licenses for 90 days to three years, Baker said.

Recently police have cited most fake ID offenders after observing students who appear to be minors walking out of bars. Baker said officers know the students had to show ID to get into the bar and ask to see the identification they used.

Officers are also starting to check confiscated IDs they receive from local bars and stores. Police run the names and addresses on confiscated IDs through a computer to track down the offender. Police also



Photo by Jeff Paslay
 EPD Sgt. Dennis Baker displays a book of fake IDs. More than 130 were confiscated at a bar last term.

can use DMV photos in their investigations, Baker said.

Bouncers at campus-area bars are also on the lookout for false IDs. Most of the fake IDs bouncers see are either real driver's licenses that have been altered, fake laser-printed licenses or real driver's licenses that don't belong to the people trying to use them.

John Carlson, who has checked IDs at Rennie's Landing for about three years, said he will turn customers away if he doubts their ID and will confiscate IDs that he believes are fake.

If bouncers suspect a person is trying to use another's ID, they will ask for a signature or will quiz the customer on the information on the ID before they take it.

"We had people who couldn't remember what last name to sign," said New Max's bouncer Kary Chase.

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Resource People: Susan Gary, Tax Attorney
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 Ennis Wuite, Certified Public Accountant
 Tina Zamora, UO Accounting Graduate

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