



## **Navy bans sale of alcohol on its bases between 10pm and 6am to curb sexual assaults and drink-related crimes**

- **Rules to curb drinking habits as Admiral battles to lower DUI offenses**
- **\$91.9 million of spirits were sold on bases last year**

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

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Sales of liquor are to be restricted on Navy bases to try to reduce sexual assaults and other crimes, the leading Admiral has said.

Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jonathan Greenert has ordered a series of changes to the way alcohol is sold on bases, including a ban on sales in its mini marts and restricted selling times at other stores.

'It's not going to fix everything, but it is a real step in the right direction,' David Jernigan, Johns Hopkins University's director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, said.



Last orders: Sailors will be restricted from buying alcohol overnight on bases

'Historically, the military, as elsewhere, has viewed these problems as individual problems to be dealt with by identifying the individual with the problem. While that's important, the research shows it's much more effective actually to look at it as a population problem and to deal with things that are affecting everybody across the population,' he said.

The changes, which include not selling alcohol between 10pm and 6am, are the latest addition to a broader alcohol education and awareness program that appears to have had some success.

Throughout the Navy, the number of alcohol-related criminal offenses dropped from 5,950 in 2007 to 4,216 last year.

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The number of DUI offenses dropped from 2,025 to 1,218 during that same period, according to Navy Personnel Command.

Liquor will still be sold on U.S. bases at a discount of up to 10 per cent for what it can be bought at a regular store, but sales will be limited to dedicated package stores or exchanges that sell a variety of items.

At Naval Station Norfolk, the main exchange is comparable to a small shopping mall that sells clothing, electronics and jewelry, among other things, at a discount.

At smaller naval bases, the exchanges are not as sprawling but still often have the feel of big-box retail. While hours at those stores vary, most are open between 9am and 9pm.



Restricted: Alcohol will be stacked at the back of the building in larger stores on bases, such as the NEX in Norfolk, Virginia

The Navy's minimarts at the Norfolk base currently start selling liquor as early as 6am - four hours earlier than people can buy it at Virginia's state-run ABC stores off-base.

Mr Jernigan said a preference among young people for distilled spirits over beer and wine means the Navy's moves could be helpful.

'Reducing the availability of one kind [of alcohol] is a step in the right direction, but you can certainly get just as impaired from drinking beer and wine as you can from distilled spirits,' he said.

Last year, the Navy reported \$91.9 million in distilled spirits sales, compared with \$39.3 million in wine and \$62.3 million in beer. The Navy uses 70 per cent of the profits from its sales of alcoholic and non-alcoholic products to support morale, welfare and recreation programs.

Admiral Greenert has ordered the exchanges to display alcohol only in the rear of its stores. The new rules are set to take effect by October.

His order on alcohol sales was issued the same day last month that the Navy announced other initiatives to prevent sexual assaults.

Measures include hiring more criminal investigators and installing better lighting on bases.

The effort follows a Pentagon report, released in May, that estimated as many as 26,000 service members may have been sexually assaulted last year.



Curbed: The Navy is trying to restrict access to beer and other drinks to reduce crimes

Alcohol is often involved. In a survey, 55 per cent of Navy women said they or the offender had consumed alcohol before unwanted sexual contact.

Navy officials said they were not trying to keep sailors from drinking rather, they wanted them to do so responsibly.

The Navy is already holding random alcohol-detection tests when sailors report for duty, and soon the devices will be found on store shelves for personal use. The single-use product will sell for \$1.99.

Mr Jernigan suggested the Navy may want to end discounts for alcohol, just as it did with tobacco.

Not all sailors believe the new rules will help.

'If people are going to drink, they're still going to buy it wherever,' Seaman Bryan Free told Associated Press, as he bought a bottle of vodka from a Naval Station Norfolk gas station.

'So if they take it out of here, it's not going to do nothing because they're going to go to the package store right out of base. That's usually where everybody gets it. So it doesn't really matter.'



Variety: Currently sailors are able to buy a wide range of drinks and other goods at base stores, such as the Main Exchange in Norfolk

Robert Parker, a University of California at Riverside sociology professor who has studied the links between alcohol and crime, said restricting on-base alcohol sales should help even if there are places to buy it nearby.

'If you make something like alcohol harder to get, you restrict the hours, you restrict the places it can be bought, then generally consumption goes down in that community or that area because people have a lot of things to do in addition to buying alcohol,' he said.

'There will be some individuals that will be determined no matter what, and they'll travel 100 miles to buy a six pack, but most people won't do that,' he added.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2396296/Navy-bans-alcohol-sale-bases-10pm-6am-curb-drink-related-crimes.html#ixzz2eb5GQjbz>

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