

# What our Kids are Using?

**Miami...Growlers are here.  
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I pull into the neighborhood gas station on 32 Ave and Coral Way in order to pump some gas and grab a cold drink. As I walk in to the Mobil gas station I'm welcomed by something I didn't expect; this gas station looked more like a liquor store than anything else. As I entered, to my left and right there were rows stacked with beer cases of all flavors, types and sizes, hailing from the tiny corners of the US to the far expanses of the world. I had never seen anything like it in a gas station. I continued to look around, and headed over to the counter to observe and take some mental notes. There I saw no less than 10 specialty "craft" beers on tap being doled out in large glass and aluminum containers. I was able to ask the owner a few questions, and to my surprise received a crash course about the containers, called "Crowlers" and "Growlers", and the burgeoning craft beer scene in South Florida. The whole experience raised a lot of questions for me, so I headed home to do some additional research. To my surprise Growlers are now the new beer CRAZE in South Florida. How will increased access to large volumes of beer on tap in an expanded selection of retail outlets (i.e., Walmart, Target, Publix etc...) impact underage drinking? Will it increase retail access for children? Will it alter attitudes and perceived risk regarding drinking?

According to the Brew Industry of Florida, Florida first began experiencing a large influx of new microbreweries/ craft breweries in 2013, and with that came the upwards trend toward the Growler. A growler is simply a glass jug that carries a half-gallon of beer. Growlers are filled straight from the tap, sealed and sometimes labeled. The growler itself is purchased for a set price, and fill prices range anywhere from around \$5 to upwards of \$20 or more. Most venues allow you to bring back your washed growler, and get a refill at a discounted rate. Growlers must be refrigerated, which will give them a shelf-life of 7-10 days, or around 2-3 days once opened.

Two of the major concerns regarding underage drinking and the growing trend of growlers are increased access to large volume single containers of alcohol and the increased alcohol by volume for many of the craft beers peddled through these growlers. Historically, Florida had a variety of laws restricting the sale of beer and other malt liquors to containers that hold either 32 ounces or fewer or 128 ounces or more. After three years of failed efforts, the legalization of the industry standard 64-ounce beer growlers, which are the most popular and ideal size for consumers, became available for Florida residents. They can be filled and refilled by a vendor-licensed brewer in a sealed container for off-premise consumption, and are to be labeled with the anticipated percentage of alcohol by volume and the seal must be unbroken.

Another key area of concern, is the increased alcohol by volume of many of the craft beers sold through growlers. Alcohol by volume (ABV, abv, or alc/vol) is a standard measure of how much alcohol (ethanol) is contained in a given volume of an alcoholic beverage. Traditional mass produced beer is generally around 4-5% ABV. Most craft beers range from 7-12% ABV, and there are some brands clocking in at upwards of 20%. While a higher ABV often represents a greater level of flavor and complexity, which is something you would expect from a smaller batch craft brewery, it also means that the physiologic effects of alcohol play a greater role. Many retailers offset this by serving higher ABV beverages in smaller glasses. While Growlers are supposed to allow at-home consumption for responsible drinkers, it is not hard to see how

## THE GROWLER STATION

### WHAT IS A GROWLER

#### CAPPED FRESHNESS

Caps are what seal the growler, not only to make sure none of your precious beer is spilled, but also to make sure it stays fresh. The Growler Station uses special caps with inserts, meaning your beer stays fresher longer.

#### 64 OUNCES

Almost a half a gallon of the freshest craft beer equals one good night. Oh yeah, if you're making it an early night we also offer 32 oz. growlers.

#### FRESH CRAFT BEER

At its core, this is what The Growler Station is all about, fresh craft beer served the way it should be. How do we achieve this mission, check out our filling systems. We counter pressure with CO<sub>2</sub> and seal the caps without any oxygen in the growler.

#### COMPLETELY REUSABLE

Buy a growler once, use it over and over again each time you visit The Growler Station. Just make sure it's washed to make sure you enjoy each fill of beer to the fullest.

#### AMBER COLORED

The growler's darker glass protects the beer from excess light and UV, which breaks down the beer's integrity.



## FRESH CRAFT BEER TO GO

these can be a slippery slope for underage drinkers if they gain access. Adolescents often will not have the maturity to account for beverages with a higher ABV, especially in such large containers.



In May, Governor Scott signed a bill into law, making Miami the 47<sup>th</sup> state to approve the resale of these containers. After three years of fighting, this represents a significant attitude shift and relaxation of the perceived risk/threat of alcohol in Miami. Ultimately, this changing of ideals presents the largest threat to the health and safety of Miami youth. TMC led the process to develop the county approved CCAP. Qualitative and quantitative assessments were administered by local community coalitions to get an accurate interpretation of the determinants and underlying causes of adolescent substance abuse in the county. Out of this process, it was determined, early initiation of underage drinking,

perception of risk and harm, and current 30- day use are the most critical risk factors effecting M-DC youth. Additionally the 2014 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey demonstrated that 22.1% of Miami youth have used alcohol in the past 30 days and 21.5% had their first sip of alcohol by age 13 or younger. Increased access to growlers can adversely affect all of these determinants. One of four MDC children lives in poverty (37.8% - black-non-Hispanic) placing MDC children at greater risk for negative outcomes than their Florida counterparts. It is of the utmost importance that we continue to educate ourselves and remain abreast of alcohol and environmental policies throughout the county; it is the only way we can continue to safeguard our youth and contribute to the promotion of safe and healthy communities.