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Highland Park 15-year-old in ICU with alcohol poisoning

12:00 AM CDT on Saturday, May 22, 2010

By TANYA EISERER / The Dallas Morning News
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A 15-year-old Highland Park student is in intensive care at a hospital after collapsing from [alcohol poisoning](#) Thursday at the Palladium Ballroom near downtown Dallas.

The teen, who is not being named because she is a minor, is expected to survive but was put on a ventilator to assist her in breathing, authorities said. Her blood alcohol content was recorded at 0.40.

"Our concern is that the girl's health and welfare have been jeopardized by somebody," said [Dallas police](#) Sgt. Paul Keough, a supervisor in the youth operations unit.

"The investigation will hopefully reveal who gave her the alcohol and we can file the appropriate charges."

Whoever provided the alcohol to the teen will probably face at least a Class A misdemeanor, he said.

Three men – Joshua Francis, 19; Jacob Meredith, 17; and Kevin O'Boyle, 18 – who were with the teen at the Palladium were arrested after police found them in possession of high-quality fake driver's licenses that showed them to be of legal age to drink. That has attracted the attention of the [Secret Service](#) and the Texas Department of Public Safety, authorities said.

Authorities described the club's management as very cooperative. It does not appear the club did anything wrong, police said.

The incident happened about 9 p.m. at the Palladium, on Lamar Street near the [Jack Evans](#) Police Headquarters, when the teen was found unconscious inside a restroom in the club, according to a police report.

The teen had been at a concert with a large group of friends, including the three men with the fake driver's licenses. Police do not believe that the teen had a fake ID because she did not have a white wrist band that would have allowed her to buy alcohol.

The girl's family could not be reached for comment.

John Gilbert, the Palladium's general manager, said the venue is cooperating with the authorities and trying to determine how the youths made their way into the ballroom with the fake identification. He

said the Palladium has a wrist-band scanning system that should have detected the fake IDs.

"You have to swipe a valid Texas ID in order to print out a wristband," Gilbert said. "It actually has your name and driver's license information printed onto the band, so it detects if an ID is fake and will kick back 'denied' if the ID is fake."

He said several of the youths were wearing wristbands that had been printed from the machines, indicating the counterfeit licenses were of a higher quality than usual.

"They used those to gain admission as persons over the age of 21," Keough said. "Obviously, they had the money to purchase very good counterfeit documents."

When police arrived, the three men were arrested on suspicion of public intoxication. Officers checked their driver's licenses, running them through a squad car card reader, and found them to be fake. The forged licenses showed the correct information, including the driver's license numbers, but the birth years had been altered, Keough said.

Rebecca Lopez of WFAA-TV contributed to this report.