Montgomery County

KEEPING IT SAFE®

Under 21 Alcohol Prevention Coalition

Video Contest Guidelines

Montgomery County, Maryland

The Keeping it Safe (KIS) Coalition is a multi-agency, public-private coalition established in 1992 with the goals of deterring underage alcohol use and reducing youth access to alcohol.

KIS encourages student teams (two or more students) from Montgomery County public and private high schools and middle schools to create a 30-second public service message from selected topics about the risks and dangers of under 21 alcohol use. The contest is open to teams of two or more students enrolled in Montgomery County public or private schools or in faith-based or service-based organizations.

Review the following helpful tips before submitting your public service message. Failure to follow guidelines or required information will result in the entry being disqualified.

Be sure to:

- Avoid using copyrighted music, images, labels/signage from any source without permission including but not limited to magazines, books, DVDs, videotapes, television programs, web sites, films, iTunes, CDs, YouTube (etc.) or commercials. Documented permission must be included with entry if using copyrighted materials.
- Avoid clothing, language, or music which glorifies alcohol drugs, sex, violence or gang related paraphernalia.
- Cover, distort, or make your own labels. Do not feature branded products in your video.
- List sources of information on the reflection page.
- Use public domain background music source. If the music was written by a student, acknowledge during credits. Public domain materials are acceptable. Royalty-free music and images purchased from stock materials companies are acceptable.
- If mailed or hand-delivered, your submission must be on a DVD or flash drive in a format that is compatible with Mac or PC computers. You may also submit your entries electronically via our webpage.

Guidelines for the 30 second public service message:

- Please note that this is not an anti-drunk driving message contest, but one that addresses the risks of under 21 alcohol use.
- Speak slowly and clearly so that all your words are understood by the audience and the judges.
- Make sure background music or sounds do not interfere with any spoken dialogue.

- Screen text, size and display need to be readable.
- The message must be 30 seconds; slates and credits cannot be overlaid onto the PSA or included in the 30 second message allotment. Entries over 30 seconds will be disqualified.

Slate/credits description information:

- Team name
- School/organization
- Student producer (s) (first names only)
- Names of the student team members (first names only)

Other Information:

- Winning entries may be submitted to multiple media outlets. Decisions regarding use of video rest with the media outlets' director.
- KIS has the right to edit and to use all entries for public information purposes.
- KIS is unable to offer student service-learning hours as the students are not under direct supervision of the KIS coordinator. The student team sponsor must be responsible for documenting student service-learning hours as per SSL regulations. KIS will issue verification of the completed project, upon request.
- All entries become the property of KIS Coalition.

Quick Tech Tips (Source: Montgomery Community Media)

Shot Composition:

1. Use a tripod if you have one! Avoid the shakes
2. Focus [on the eyes]
    a. Zoom in as close as you can to the subject's eyes
    b. Focus until the eyes glisten
    c. Zoom out to your shot
3. Use the rule of thirds
    a. Important things should be on the upper third or lower third of the frame
    b. The eyes will become the point in which the viewer will want to look at, so frame them on the top third.
4. Avoid "negative space"
    a. Frame the subject to allow an appropriate amount of headroom (space above the person)
    b. Having shots too loose will make the talent look small, which could be uninteresting

Lighting:

1. Use existing light when possible
    a. If there is enough lighting in a room or outside for the camera, use it!
    b. If you use existing light, be sure it is not creating unwanted shadows or uneven lighting on the talent
2. "Bounce" the source
    a. Using a reflecting card or white board to reflect the main source of lighting will eliminate some shadows, but will not over-light the subject

    b. Use the 45-degree rule for lighting-the light and bounce card should be 45 degrees from the direction the talent is looking on opposite sides. Even if the sun is your source of light!
3. White balance your camera any time the light changes
    a. If your camera doesn't automatically white balance, you must white balance every time the lighting changes

Sound:

1. Have a microphone? Use it!
    a. The camera or cell phone's microphone is designed to pick up ambient sound around the area, but not necessarily an individual talent
    b. Using a lavaliere (lapel) microphone is great for interviews
    c. A hand-held microphone is still better than the camera's microphone
2. Placing the microphone closer to the person's mouth will help eliminate ambient sounds from the surrounding area
    a. For lavalieres: 8" from a person's mouth is a good distance. Soft-spoken talent may need to have the microphone slightly closer
    b. Hand-held microphones should be just on the edge of the frame of video
    c. If you must use the camera or cell phone's microphone, place the it as close as the subject will allow
3. Record ambient sound
    a. You may never know when a little extra background sound could be helpful in post-production
    b. After an interview, or while shooting b-roll, just let the camera record for a few minutes while everyone is quiet.
4. Appropriate music will add to the project
    a. Music can reinforce the mood of a piece
    b. Be sure not to have the music too loud if there will be speaking
    c. Selecting music without lyrics will be less distracting to the viewer
    d. Music can be used to cover "tape hiss" or other quiet, unwanted sounds

General Tips:

1. Shoot for post-production
    a. "Fix it in post" should never be the goal. If something doesn't look right, it will almost always be easier to re-shoot the footage, especially if you are still on location
    b. Keep in mind where you might want to cut away, or cut in. Plan your b-roll taping accordingly.
2. Use the "manual" settings for your camera
    a. The automatic settings are great on most cameras, but they take the control away from the operator
    b. Auto-iris, white balance and focus sometimes have limitations
    c. Focus shifts (when the focus bounces between soft and sharp) can happen when the camera is confused about what should be in focus
    d. Slight changes in light levels can cause a similar problem with the iris
    e. If you can adjust the audio on your camera, put that in manual also
3. Allow extra time for setup, strike and retakes if needed
4. Plan, plan, plan!

a. Using storyboards, scripts, and edit decision lists for post-production may be time consuming and boring at first, but they will save tons of time in the long run!
b. Even if the final product doesn't look exactly the way you originally pictured it, having a plan when you go into the field or into editing will help move the process along