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CITY NEWS

Madison police conduct ‘bar checks’ Thursday after signaling end to ‘raids’

Students reacted on social media, calling MPD’s bar checks a “setup” and “trap.”

By [Annika Bereny](#) and [Ella Hanley](#)

October 3, 2025 | 8:58pm CDT

The Madison Police Department (MPD) collected nearly 200 fake IDs and cited eight people for underage drinking at campus-area bars Thursday night after an [alder and MPD officer indicated](#) the department was moving away from untargeted bar “raids”.

MPD collected more than 180 fake IDs from patrons of City Bar and Moon Bar Thursday night, and eight people were cited at City Bar.

On social media, students called the announcement “bait” and a “trap” and blamed University of Wisconsin-Madison Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin, who has no authority over MPD.

MPD and District 8 Alder MGR Govindarajan confirmed Wednesday that MPD would still conduct nightlife “safety enforcement” — otherwise known as “bar checks” — at campus-area bars, but with more discretion. For example, if a bar is over capacity or reported with many underage patrons inside, MPD will conduct a “bar check”, and they may take samples of ID.

However, MPD also indicated to the Cardinal that personnel were “going to try to steer away” from conducting ‘raids’ — defined as police-barricaded doors and large-scale citation issuances, like at [The Nitty Gritty in January](#).

At the time of the check, police said City Bar was over their 143-person capacity, with 160 patrons inside the bar, almost all of which were underage. MPD collected 137 fake IDs from City Bar.

MPD also conducted a line check at Wando’s Bar, meaning officers monitored patrons waiting outside to enter.

“If we’re seeing underagers in line, if we’re getting information from people that there are bars full of underagers, then we’ll utilize that information to go and do checks,” Captain Kipp Hartman of MPD’s Central District said Friday. “But again, if it’s a licensed establishment, they have to be following the liquor license that they all have and that they all know.”

Hartman said the check at City Bar was an “amnesty check” in which officers offer patrons the choice to have their fake ID confiscated without issuing citations. When asked about the 8 students cited during the check, Hartman said he didn’t currently have that information.

“After speaking with MPD and expressing my concerns with last night’s events, they do not see this as bar raids,” Govindarajan said in a statement to The Daily Cardinal. “These were officers conducting quick ‘line checks’, looking for patterns like underage students in line, which led to limited checks inside bars.”

Govindarajan noted that while many fake IDs were collected, MPD issued few citations. He also said officers were present at establishments for shorter durations, noting a contrast from the “hours-long operations we saw last spring.”

Hartman said the proportion of fake IDs at campus-area bars Thursday indicated MPD would remain vigilant and continue to investigate bars who let in underage individuals.

“We’ve got a pretty serious issue with bars allowing underagers in,” Hartman said. “It’s an indication that we’ll need to be following up with the bars and that we’ll be needing to do more checks with them in the near future.”

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