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New Doggy Bag Law Lets Customers Take Alcohol Home

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It's called the "doggy bag" law, and it will allow Iowans to drive their cars with an uncorked bottle of wine. Instead of feeling like they have to drink it all at the restaurant to avoid violating the open container law, they can take it home with them and drink it later.

Right now, if you get stopped by the police with an open bottle of wine, officers can't tell who put the cork in the bottle, and you could be charged with having an open bottle of alcohol in their car. That's why many restaurants in the area won't let customers take their wine home with them.

It's a rare occasion when Laura Sawatzke orders a full bottle of wine at lunch. Laura and her mom have to bike home and they don't want to waste what's left in the bottle.

"I normally just order wine when I'm with a group of girls lots of friends I know I can finish it with. However, if I knew I could take it home, I would do it more often," says Laura.

July 1st, Laura will be able to do just that. Restaurants will be able to send customers home with their unfinished bottles in "doggy bags." Tamper proof plastic that proves you were not drinking while driving.

"It's going to help us. It's going to eliminate some liability for us. It's going to help guests make good decisions now that they know they can take it home," says Jeff Duncan of Dos Rios.

Restaurant managers hope the bags will encourage their customers to drink responsibly. Dos Rios offers a wine down Wednesday, where all bottles are half price. Once the law is in effect, even a lone diner can order a bottle and still drive safely.

"You wouldn't feel like you had to stay and finish or down a couple glasses at the end of the night," says Laura Sawatzke.

Diners can keep their bottle, and restaurants perhaps sell more wine. That is something everyone can raise their glasses to.

"This will facilitate both sides of the fence. Customers can be responsible and still take the wine home," says Duncan.

The law goes into affect tomorrow, but don't expect every restaurant to have the doggy bags on the first day. If you want to take advantage of the new law right away, you might want to buy your own doggy bags. The website is www.winedoggybag.com.