Local store clerks who sell beer, wine or other alcoholic beverages would be wise to check youthful customers’ identification before ringing up that sale.

A recent crackdown on local stores and restaurants selling alcohol to minors netted some 13 arrests, with four warrants still outstanding, a Lafayette City Police spokesman said Monday at about 2 p.m.

An investigation into local liquor sales to minors was initiated last month by City Police and the Lafayette Alcohol Traffic and Action Campaign (ATAC), in response to complaints by parents and others in the community, the spokesman said.

The investigation involved four volunteers, ages 13 to 17, accompanied by their parents and police officers. They visited 23 establishments, including grocery stores, convenience stores and restaurants, according to the spokesman.

At 17 of the establishments, the teenagers were able to purchase liquor without presenting proof of age, said ATAC director Phil Bordelon.

Due to the investigation, 15 arrest warrants were issued, and two arrests were made at the time of the liquor sales, the City Police spokesman said. Since Friday, 11 of the warrants had been served by early Monday afternoon.

Bordelon described the investigation as the “first major crackdown,” since an amendment to a City of Lafayette ordinance now makes it possible to enforce penalties against establishments which sell alcohol to minors.

The City ordinance previously lacked an appeals process, Bordelon explained, but the September 1985 amendment corrects that omission, and therefore the penalty can be exacted.

Before the amendment, establishments would allow the seller to sell beer, and the establishment would pay the fine, and continue to sell the beer, which would more than make up for the fine, Bordelon maintained.

The penalty establishments can expect to face now is liquor license suspension upon the seller’s conviction, he said. Those suspensions are 15 days for first offense, 30 days for second offense, 45 days for third offense, and revocation for fourth offense.

Responsible establishments should think of ways to prevent sales to minors, the ATAC director said.

“They better have a written policy regarding sales to minors, and distribute it to all personnel to prove some sort of education has taken place,” Bordelon said.

“Another is an identification checking policy, and the only identification I think would be acceptable would be a legitimate driver’s license,” he added.

Bordelon pointed out that minors should also be aware of the liability they may face for presenting false identification, particularly with the increased penalties placed on bar owners.

“This will enrage the bar owners who are trying to act legitimately. It won’t be the first time in the state of Louisiana for a bar owner to take civil action against a minor and a parent,” Bordelon said, in the case where a bar’s license is revoked for selling alcohol to a minor who presents a valid-looking identification card.

“There is not any more of this, ‘I don’t have to worry’ attitude for minors,” he said.