



April 20, 2016

Dear Retailer:

As you know, the illegal sale of tobacco to minors is a serious issue in our state that threatens the health of our kids. Nearly 90 percent of smokers start before age 18, and the younger one starts smoking, the more likely he or she will begin a lifelong addiction to tobacco. As a tobacco retailer, you play a critical role in keeping tobacco products out of the hands of youth.

Tips for retailers:

- Always check a valid form of ID for anyone who appears under the age of **30**.
- Minors are issued vertical IDs, so if you see a vertical/tall ID, stop and check the dates carefully.
- The buyer must be 18 years of age and born on or before today's date in 1998 in order to purchase tobacco in 2016.
- The expiration date, along with photo accuracy, should always be confirmed. The sale should not be completed if the license is expired.

Serious penalties for sales to minors:

The State of Washington takes tobacco sales to minors seriously and the consequences are strict. Selling tobacco to a minor is a violation of RCW 26.28.080, which is a gross misdemeanor criminal offense. Individuals and retailers who are found selling tobacco to a minor in any form—cigarettes, cigars, cigarette papers, smokeless tobacco products may be cited, criminally or civilly, for the offense. Stores that are caught selling tobacco to minors may be fined, suspended, or both up to and including revocation of their tobacco/cigarette retail license.

Resources for retailers:

- Today's Date Signs. Keep this sign posted until December 31, 2016
- ID and License Guide
- Tips for retailers

Because compliance checks occur regularly across the state year round, we encourage you to display this information so it can be easily seen by both your employees and patrons. That helps everyone follow the law to keep kids safe.

Thank you for playing your part to create a safer and healthier Washington. If you have questions about the laws related to tobacco sales in Washington, contact the Enforcement Division of the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board at (360) 664-9878.

Sincerely,

Kathy Lofy, MD
State Health Officer

Washington State Department
of Health

Justin Nordhorn
Chief of Enforcement

Washington State Liquor
and Cannabis Board

Chris Imhoff, LICSW
Director, Behavioral Health and
Recovery

Washington State Department of
Social and Health Services