



Healthy
HotSpot

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Cook County Tobacco 21 Ordinance: What Retailers Need to Know

Why this law is important:

- 95 percent of smokers begin by age 21. If a young person can make it past 21 without using tobacco, the odds are they will never start.
- Currently, 29% of high schools seniors in Cook County use tobacco products. If we don't reduce youth tobacco use, it will cost our community billions in healthcare costs and lives lost.
- Increasing the minimum legal sales age of tobacco to 21 keeps legal tobacco purchases out of our high schools.
- 7 out of 10 adults in suburban Cook County support Tobacco 21.

What retailers need to know to stay in compliance with this Cook County Ordinance:

- All licensed tobacco retailers in unincorporated Cook County must comply with the Cook County Ordinance, effective June 1, 2019
- No retailer may sell or distribute tobacco products to any person under 21 years of age. (§54.305, a1)
- Each retailer shall request and examine the photographic identification of any person purchasing tobacco products so as to verify the purchaser is over 21 years of age. (§54.305, a2)
- Every retailer of tobacco products shall place and maintain, in legible condition, at each point of sale of tobacco products to consumers, a sign stating (§54.305, f):
"Warning: It is a Violation of the Law For Cigarettes Or Other Tobacco Products To Be Sold To Any Person Under The Age of 21."
- The sign shall not be less than eight inches by 11 inches in size. The text of such printed card shall be in red letters on a white background, said letters to be at least one inch high.

How the Ordinance will be enforced:

The Cook County Department of Public Health will conduct random, unannounced inspections at locations where tobacco products are sold to ensure compliance with this Ordinance. (§54.303, b1)

1. For a first violation, an administrative penalty of \$250.00;
2. For a second violation, occurring after a final determination of liability for a first violation, and within a 12-month period, an administrative penalty of \$500.00 and a suspension of the license of the retail tobacco dealer for 30 days;
3. For a third violation, occurring after a final determination of liability for a second violation and within a 12-month period, an administrative penalty of \$1,000.00 and a revocation of the license of the retail tobacco dealer for one year.



Cook County DEPT. of
Public Health

Promoting health. Preventing disease. **Protecting you.**

Healthy HotSpot is an initiative led by the Cook County Department of Public Health that aims to build healthy places in suburban Cook County through community partnerships. For more information, visit healthyhotspot.org.

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