

Model Tobacco Ordinance

1997 Edition

Ordinance # _____

An ordinance relating to the sale, possession, and use of tobacco, tobacco products, and tobacco related devices in the (county, city, or township) and to reduce the illegal sale, possession, and use of such items to and by minors.

The _____ (County Board, City Council, Town Board) of _____
Ordains:

(**Note:** Use whatever adoption language is required for your particular branch of government.)

Section 100. Purpose. Because the (county, city, township) recognizes that many persons under the age of 18 years purchase or otherwise obtain, possess, and use tobacco, tobacco products, and tobacco related devices, and such sales, possession, and use are violations of both State and Federal laws; and because studies, which are hereby accepted and adopted, (**Note:** List the specific studies and reports used, if any) have shown that most smokers begin smoking before they have reached the age of 18 years and that those persons who reach the age of 18 years without having started smoking are significantly less likely to begin smoking; and because smoking has been shown to be the cause of several serious health problems which subsequently place a financial burden on all levels of government; this ordinance shall be intended to regulate the sale, possession, and use of tobacco, tobacco products, and tobacco related devices for the purpose of enforcing and furthering existing laws, to protect minors against the serious effects associated with the illegal use of tobacco, tobacco products, and tobacco related devices, and to further the official public policy of the State of Minnesota in regard to preventing young people from starting to smoke as stated in Minn. Stat. §144.391.

Section 200. Definitions and Interpretations. Except as may otherwise be provided or clearly implied by context, all terms shall be given their commonly accepted definitions. The singular shall include the plural and the plural shall include the singular. The masculine shall include the feminine and neuter, and vice-versa. The term “shall” means mandatory and the term “may” means permissive. The following terms shall have the definitions given to them:

Subd. 1 Tobacco or Tobacco Products. “Tobacco” or “Tobacco products” shall mean any substance or item containing tobacco leaf, including but not limited to, cigarettes; cigars; pipe tobacco; snuff; fine cut or other chewing tobacco; cheroots; stogies; perique; granulated, plug cut, crimp cut, ready-rubbed, and other smoking tobacco; snuff flowers; cavendish; shorts; plug and twist tobaccos; dipping tobaccos; refuse scraps, clippings, cuttings, and sweepings of tobacco; and other kinds and forms of tobacco leaf prepared in such manner as to be suitable for chewing, sniffing, or smoking. (**Note:** This definition expands on the statutory definition to be more inclusive. See Minn. Stat. §609.685)

Subd. 2 Tobacco Related Devices. “Tobacco related devices” shall mean any tobacco product as well as a pipe, rolling papers, or other device intentionally designed or intended to be used in a manner which enables the chewing, sniffing, or smoking of tobacco or tobacco products.

Subd. 3 Self-Service Merchandising. “Self-Service Merchandising” shall mean open displays of tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices in any manner where any person shall have access to the tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices, without the assistance or intervention of the licensee or the licensee’s employee. The assistance or intervention shall entail the actual physical exchange of the tobacco, tobacco product, or tobacco related device between the customer and the licensee or employee. Self-service merchandising shall not include vending machines. (**Note:** Under the FDA tobacco regulations adopted in 1996, self-service sales are interpreted as being any sale where there is not an actual physical exchange of the tobacco between the clerk and the customer).

Subd. 4 Vending Machine. “Vending Machine” shall mean any mechanical, electric or electronic, or other type of device which dispenses tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices upon the insertion of money, tokens, or other form of payment directly into the machine by the person seeking to purchase the tobacco, tobacco product, or tobacco related device. (**Note:** At least one jurisdiction has ruled that a device by which an employee must insert the money in order to operate the machine is not a vending machine for the purpose of this type of ordinance).

Subd. 5. Individually packaged. “Individually packaged” shall mean the practice of selling any tobacco or tobacco product wrapped individually for sale. Individually wrapped tobacco and tobacco products shall include, but not be limited to, single cigarette packs, single bags or cans of loose tobacco in any form, and single cans or other packaging of snuff or chewing tobacco. Cartons or other packaging containing more than a single pack or other container as described in this subdivision shall not be considered individually packaged.

Subd. 6. Loosies. “Loosies” shall mean the common term used to refer to a single or individually packaged cigarette.

Subd. 7 Minor. “Minor” shall mean any natural person who has not yet reached the age of eighteen (18) years.

Subd. 8 Retail Establishment. “Retail Establishment” shall mean any place of business where tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices are available for sale to the general public. Retail establishments shall include, but not be limited to, grocery stores, convenience stores, and restaurants.

Subd. 9 Moveable Place of Business. “Moveable Place of Business” shall refer to any form of business operated out of a truck, van, automobile, or other type of vehicle or transportable shelter and not a fixed address store front or other permanent type of structure authorized for sales transactions.

Subd. 10 Sale. A “sale” shall mean any transfer of goods for money, trade, barter, or other consideration.

Subd. 11 Compliance Checks. “Compliance Checks” shall mean the system the (county, city, or township) uses to investigate and ensure that those authorized to sell tobacco, tobacco products, and tobacco related devices are following and complying with the requirements of this ordinance. Compliance checks shall involve the use of minors as authorized by this ordinance. Compliance Checks shall also mean the use of minors who attempt to purchase tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices for educational, research and training purposes as authorized by State and Federal laws. Compliance checks may also be conducted by other units of government for the purpose of enforcing appropriate Federal, State, or local laws and regulations relating to tobacco, tobacco products, and tobacco related devices.

Section 300 License. No person shall sell or offer to sell any tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related device without first having obtained a license to do so from the (county, city, township).

Subd.1 Application. An application for a license to sell tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices shall be made on a form provided by the (county, city, township). The application shall contain the full name of the applicant, the applicant’s residential and business addresses and telephone numbers, the name of the business for which the license is sought, and any additional information the city deems necessary. Upon receipt of a completed application, the _____ (list appropriate official) shall forward the application to _____ (fill in licensing entity or person authorized to grant license) for action at its next regularly scheduled council meeting. If the _____ (designated application recipient) shall determine that an application is incomplete, he or she shall return the application to the applicant with notice of the information necessary to make the application complete.

Subd. 2 Action. The _____ (county board, city council, town board, or designated official) may either approve or deny the license, or it may delay action for such reasonable period of time as necessary to complete any investigation of the application or the applicant it deems necessary. (**Note:** The county, city, or township may want to provide for a background check before the application is forwarded for action. In such a case, the application should be forwarded to the investigating body within a reasonable period of time, and the background check should be completed within ten days. The application and investigation results would then be forwarded to the licensing authority or designated official for action.) If the _____ (designated licensing official or body) shall approve the license, the _____ (designated official) shall issue the license to the applicant. If the _____ (designated licensing official or body) denies the license, notice of the denial shall be given to the applicant along with notice of the applicant’s right to appeal the decision.

Subd. 3 Term. All licenses issued under this ordinance shall be valid for one calendar year from the date of issue. (**Note:** The county, city, or township may provide that all licenses expire on a specific date.)

Subd. 4 Revocation or Suspension. Any license issued under this ordinance may be revoked or suspended as provided in the Violations and Penalties section of this ordinance.

Subd. 5 Transfers. All licenses issued under this ordinance shall be valid only on the premises for which the license was issued and only for the person to whom the license was issued. No transfer of any license to another location or person shall be valid without the prior approval of _____ (fill in appropriate body or person).

Subd. 6 Moveable Place of Business. No license shall be issued to a moveable place of business. Only fixed location business shall be eligible to be licensed under this ordinance.

Subd. 7 Display. All licenses shall be posted and displayed in plain view of the general public on the licensed premise.

Subd. 8 Renewals. The renewal of a license issued under this section shall be handled in the same manner as the original application. The request for a renewal shall be made at least thirty days but no more than sixty days before the expiration of the current license. (**Note:** A different timeline may be used.) The issuance of a license issued under this ordinance shall be considered a privilege and not an absolute right of the applicant and shall not entitle the holder to an automatic renewal of the license.

Section 400. Fees. No license shall be issued under this ordinance until the appropriate license fee shall be paid in full. The fee for a license under this ordinance shall be \$ _____. (**Note:** Minnesota Session Laws 1997, Chapter 227, authorizes a license fee sufficient to cover the cost of issuing the license and the anticipated expenses costs of enforcing the ordinance. Fees may also be set in a fee schedule which is then adopted by reference in this Section: Further, some licensing authorities across the country have started using a variable rate fee system under which the amount of the fee charged depends on the type of sales to be allowed. In addition, some cities have offered discounts to retailers who agree to comply with special provisions such as providing training to their clerks. This exact type of fee system has not been tested in Minnesota Courts, but should be defensible if structured properly.)

Section 500. Basis for Denial of License. The following shall be grounds for denying the issuance or renewal of a license under this ordinance; however, except as may otherwise be provided by law, the existence of any particular ground for denial does not mean that the (county, city, or township) must deny the license. If a license is mistakenly issued or renewed to a person, it shall be revoked upon the discovery that the person was ineligible for the license under this Section: (**Note:** The following is not an exclusive nor exhaustive list, but it does represent the most common and defensible grounds for denial of the license. A licensing authority cannot act arbitrarily or capriciously when deciding whether or not to deny a license. Further, an applicant is entitled to a certain amount of due process before being denied a license.)

- A. The applicant is under the age of 18 years.
- B. The applicant has been convicted within the past five years of any violation of a Federal, State, or local law, ordinance provision, or other regulation relating to tobacco or tobacco products, or tobacco related devices. (**Note:** The five year ban is a common number but it could be modified. Bans longer than five years, however, are more risky.)
- C. The applicant has had a license to sell tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices revoked within the preceding twelve months of the date of application.
- D. The applicant fails to provide any information required on the application, or provides false or misleading information.
- E. The applicant is prohibited by Federal, State, or other local law, ordinance, or other regulation, from holding such a license.

Section 600. Prohibited Sales. It shall be a violation of this ordinance for any person to sell or offer to sell any tobacco, tobacco product, or tobacco related device:

- A. To any person under the age of eighteen (18) years.
- B. By means of any type of vending machine, except as may otherwise be provided in this ordinance. (**Note:** See Section 700, Vending Machines”.)
- C. By means of self-service methods whereby the customer does not need to make a verbal or written request to an employee of the licensed premise in order to receive the tobacco, tobacco product, or tobacco related device and whereby there is not a physical exchange of the tobacco, tobacco product, or tobacco related device between the licensee or the licensee’s employee, and the customer. (Note: See discussion under Section 800, “Self Service”.)
- D. By means of loosies as defined in Section 200 of this ordinance.
- E. Containing opium, morphine, jimson weed, bella donna, strychnos, cocaine, marijuana, or other deleterious, hallucinogenic, toxic, or controlled substances except nicotine and other substances found naturally in tobacco or added as part of an otherwise lawful manufacturing process. (**Note:** State law will require the disclosure of substances such as arsenic, lead, ammonia, cadmium, and formaldehyde found in or produced by cigarettes. It is not the intention of this provision to ban the sale of lawfully manufactured cigarettes or other tobacco products. Counties, cities, or townships with concerns about “enhanced” cigarettes should contact the an attorney for additional information.)
- F. By any other means, to any other person, in any other manner or form prohibited by Federal, State, or other local law, ordinance provision, or other regulation.

Section 700 Vending Machines. (**Note** : The county, city, or township will need to make choices in this section and may combine parts of different options.)

Option #1: It shall be unlawful for any person licensed under this ordinance to allow the sale of tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices by the means of a vending machine. (**Note**: Because this provision is more restrictive than its comparable FDA regulation, a city seeking an absolute ban on vending machines, which has been upheld by the courts, would need to seek a preemption waiver.)

Option #2: It shall be unlawful for any person licensed under this ordinance to allow the sale of tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices by the means of a vending machine unless minors are at all times prohibited from entering the licensed establishment. (**Note**: This option mirrors both the State and Federal laws.)

Section 800. Self-Service Sales. It shall be unlawful for a licensee under this ordinance to allow the sale of tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices by any means where by the customer may have access to such items without having to request the item from the licensee or the licensee's employee and whereby there is not a physical exchange of the tobacco, tobacco product, or the tobacco related device between the licensee or his or her clerk and the customer. All tobacco, tobacco products, and tobacco related devices shall either be stored behind a counter or other area not freely accessible to customers, or in a case or other storage unit not left open and accessible to the general public. Any retailer selling tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices at the time this ordinance is adopted shall comply with this Section within days (**Note**: Fill in the blank. The county, city, or township will need to determine a reasonable time to allow for rearrangement of store, reconstruction, and/or the purchase of storage units.) following the effective date of this ordinance. (**Note**: Under State law, the self-service sale of cartons and multi-packs shall be allowed until such time as the FDA regulations take full effect (August 28, 1997 target date pending outcome of a Federal lawsuit) at which time all self-service sales of would be banned. The FDA contains an exemption far stores where minors are, at all times, prohibited from entering. The State law further restricts this exemption to stores that generate ninety (90) percent or more of their revenues from the sale tobacco and tobacco related products. Counties, cities, and townships have the option of adopting the State exemption language or allowing no exceptions. If no exceptions are allowed, an FDA preemption waiver will be required. Further, the State and Federal regulations on self-service sales only apply to cigarettes and smokeless tobacco. Local licensing authorities could, therefore, exempt cigars and other forms of tobacco without seeking a waiver.)

Section 900. Responsibility. All licensees under this ordinance shall be responsible for the actions of their employees in regard to the sale of tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices on the licensed premises, and the sale of such an item by an employee shall be considered a sale by the license holder. Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the (county, city, or township) from also subjecting the clerk to whatever penalties are appropriate under this Ordinance, State or Federal law, or other applicable law or regulation.

Section 1000. Compliance Checks and Inspections. All licensed premises shall be open to inspection by the (local law enforcement) or other authorized (county, city, or township) official during regular business hours. From time to time, but at least once per year, the (county, city, or township) shall conduct compliance checks by engaging, with the written consent of their parents or guardians, minors over the age of fifteen (15) years but less than eighteen (18) years, to enter the licensed premise to attempt to purchase tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices. Minors used for the purpose of compliance checks shall be supervised by designated law enforcement officers or other designated (county, city, or township) personnel. Minors used for compliance checks shall not be guilty of the unlawful purchase or attempted purchase, nor the unlawful possession of tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices when such items are obtained or attempted to be obtained as a part of the compliance check. No minor used in compliance checks shall attempt to use a false identification misrepresenting the minor's age, and all minors lawfully engaged in a compliance check shall answer all questions about the minor's age asked by the licensee or his or her employee and shall produce any identification, if any exists, for which he or she is asked. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit compliance checks authorized by State or Federal laws for educational, research, or training purposes, or required for the enforcement of a particular State or Federal law. (**Note:** State law now mandates at least one unannounced compliance check per year for each licensed establishment.)

Section 1100. Other Illegal Acts. Unless otherwise provided, the following acts shall be a violation of this ordinance.

Subd. 1 Illegal Sales. It shall be a violation of this ordinance for any person to sell or otherwise provide any tobacco, tobacco product, or tobacco related device to any minor,

Subd. 2 Illegal Possession. It shall be a violation of this ordinance for any minor to have in his or her possession any tobacco, tobacco product, or tobacco related device. This subdivision shall not apply to minors lawfully involved in a compliance check.

Subd. 3 Illegal Use. It shall be a violation of this ordinance for any minor to smoke, chew, sniff, or otherwise use any tobacco, tobacco product, or tobacco related device.

Subd. 4 Illegal Procurement. It shall be a violation of this ordinance for any minor to purchase or attempt to purchase or otherwise obtain any tobacco, tobacco product, or tobacco related device, and it shall be a violation of this ordinance for any person to purchase or otherwise obtain such items on behalf of a minor. It shall further be a violation for any person to coerce or attempt to coerce a minor to illegally purchase or otherwise obtain or use any tobacco, tobacco product, or tobacco related device. This subdivision shall not apply to minors lawfully involved in a compliance check.

Subd. 5 Use of False Identification. It shall be a violation of this ordinance for any minor to attempt to disguise his or her true age by the use of a false form of identification, whether the identification is that of another person or one on which the age of the person has been modified or tampered with to represent an age older than the actual age of the person.

Section 1200 Violations. (Note: This Section attempts to implement the administrative penalty provisions now required by State law.)

Subd. 1 Notice. Upon discovery of a suspected violation, the alleged violator shall be issued, either personally or by mail, a citation that sets forth the alleged violation and which shall inform the alleged violator of his or her right to be heard on the accusation.

Subd. 2 Hearings. If a person accused of violating this ordinance so requests, a hearing shall be scheduled, the time and place of which shall be published and provided to the accused violator.

Subd. 3 Hearing Officer. _____ (Note: Fill in the blank) shall serve as the hearing officer. (Note: The county board, city council, town board, or an independent hearing officer or hearing panel can be appointed.)

Subd. 4 Decision. If the hearing officer determines that a violation of this ordinance did occur, that decision, along with the hearing officers reasons for finding a violation and the penalty to be imposed under Section 1300 of this ordinance, shall be recorded in writing, a copy of which shall be provided to the accused violator. Likewise, if the hearing officer finds that no violation occurred or finds grounds for not imposing any penalty, such findings shall be recorded and a copy provided to the acquitted accused violator.

Subd. 5 Appeals. Appeals of any decision made by the hearing officer shall be filed in the district court for the jurisdiction of the (county, city, or township) in which the alleged violation occurred.

Subd. 6 Misdemeanor Prosecution. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit the (county, city, or township) From seeking prosecution as a misdemeanor for any alleged violation of this ordinance. If the (county, city, or township) elects to seek misdemeanor prosecution, no administrative penalty shall be imposed. (Note: It is clear that the intent of the State law is to impose an administrative remedy for violations. However, nothing in the law appears to prohibit misdemeanor prosecutions as generally authorized for ordinance violations if the county, city, or township believes a particular situation warrants prosecution. Further, administrative penalties are generally not considered criminal punishment for the purpose of double jeopardy. Therefore, it would be possible to prosecute an ordinance as a misdemeanor while simultaneously imposing the administrative penalties. Each entity, however, will need to determine whether or not it is comfortable seeking two types of penalties. If both penalties are to be imposed, the last sentence of the subdivision text needs to be removed. In addition, prosecution solely under State law remains an option.)

Subd. 7 Continued Violation. Each violation, and every day in which a violation occurs or continues, shall constitute a separate offense.

Section 1300 Penalties. (**Note:** The amounts set forth below are the State minimums. Counties, cities, or townships may impose higher fines, etc., although reasonableness must still be the standard. In addition, some entities prefer to adopt a fine schedule which could be referenced here instead of listing each fine.)

Subd. 1 Licensees. Any licensee found to have violated this ordinance, or whose employee shall have violated this ordinance, shall be charged an administrative fine of \$75 for a first violation of this ordinance; \$200 for a second offense at the same licensed premises within a twenty-four month period; and \$250 for a third or subsequent offense at the same location within a twenty-four month period. In addition, after the third offense, the license shall be suspended for not less than seven days.

Subd. 2 Other Individuals. Other individuals, other than minors regulated by subdivision 3 of this Subsection, found to be in violation of this ordinance shall be charged an administrative fee of \$50. (**Note:** The State law imposes this administrative penalty on anybody other than the licensee who sells tobacco to minors. The law is silent on imposing administrative penalties to those who provide but do not sell tobacco to minors. Counties, cities, and townships, however, could impose an administrative penalty as provided in this subdivision.)

Subd. 3 Minors. Minors found in unlawful possession of, or who unlawfully purchase or attempt to purchase, tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices, shall be _____ (**Note:** The state law requires the licensing authority to consult with interested parties of the courts, educators, parents, and children, to develop an appropriate penalty for minors in that particular community. The penalty does not have to be in the form of a fine. It could include tobacco related education classes, diversion programs, community services, or other penalty the city believes will be appropriate and effective.)

Subd. 4 Misdemeanor. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit the (county, city, or township) from seeking prosecution as a misdemeanor for any violation of this ordinance. (**See** Note in Section 1200, subd. 6.)

Section 1400. Exceptions and Defenses. Nothing in this ordinance shall prevent the providing of tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco related devices to a minor as part of a lawfully recognized religious, spiritual, or cultural ceremony. It shall be an affirmative defense to the violation of this ordinance for a person to have reasonably relied on proof of age as described by State law.

Section 1500 Severability and Savings Clause. If any section or portion of this ordinance shall be found unconstitutional or otherwise invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, that finding shall not serve as an invalidation or effect the validity and enforceability of any other section or provision of this ordinance.

Section 1600 Effective Date. This ordinance shall take effect _____. (**Note:** Fill in the time at which the ordinance will take effect. For example, unless otherwise provided for in the ordinance or by city charter, ordinances for cities take effect after publication.)