

Minnesota's Youth Access Laws

- It is illegal to give or sell tobacco, such as cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco; tobacco related devices, such as pipes or rolling papers; and nicotine delivery products, such as electronic cigarettes, to anyone under 18 years old. It is illegal for someone under 18 to possess or attempt to buy tobacco, tobacco-related devices or electronic cigarettes. ²
- All stores that sell tobacco must be licensed by the city or county. The store fills out an application and pays a licensing fee. The city or county chooses whether to give that store a license. ³
- Tobacco products cannot be offered for sale in open displays or be accessible to the public without clerk assistance. ⁴
- Licensed stores cannot sell single cigarettes, commonly called loosies. ⁴
- The city or county must do one unannounced compliance check at each licensed tobacco store each year. A person between the ages of 15 and 17 years goes into each store and attempts to purchase a tobacco product. If asked, the youth must show the store clerk his or her real ID. If the store clerk sells tobacco to the minor, the store has failed its compliance check.
- If a store fails a compliance check by selling tobacco to a minor, the store is penalized. They pay a fine and/or have their license to sell tobacco taken away for a period of time. ³

These Minnesota youth access laws are all enforced locally through the city or county. These city and county laws are known as tobacco licensing ordinances.

It is important that cities' tobacco licensing laws meet the minimum state requirements listed above. A main goal of all of these laws is to make it difficult for youth under 18, the largest and most important source of new smokers for the tobacco industry, to obtain tobacco. This will cut down on the number of youth, who are likely to become the next generation of smokers, to die from cancer, heart disease, and other tobacco-related diseases.

A city or county can pass laws that strengthen their tobacco licensing laws beyond the minimum required by the state. Here are some examples of what cities can do:

- Prohibit the sampling of tobacco in tobacco shops
- Require that people selling tobacco must be at least 18 years old
- Require that stores selling tobacco train their employees about youth access laws
- Prohibit the sale of all flavored tobacco products in stores accessible to people under 18
- Require that cigars be sold for a minimum of \$2.60 each
- Require that people purchasing tobacco must be at least 21 years old