



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
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**CITY IS WORKING WITH ALL LICENSED RETAILERS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH NEW TOBACCO 21 PURCHASE AGE**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today that the City of Chicago has begun educating all licensed tobacco retailers citywide to ensure full compliance on the new law which requires purchasers of tobacco products to be at least 21 years of age, as established by the tobacco prevention ordinance passed by City Council earlier this month. The City has begun outreach to retailers to ensure that they are prepared for the upcoming transition to new legal requirements that start taking effect July 1, 2016.

The tobacco prevention ordinance also includes a tax on cigars and smoking, smokeless tobacco products, and a ban on redeeming coupons and other discount vouchers—in addition to new measures in place to combat the illegal sale of tobacco. These reforms are the latest in a series of efforts by Mayor Emanuel to reduce youth smoking in Chicago.

“Youth smoking is now at a record low in Chicago, and these newest reforms will further crack down on Big Tobacco as we inspire a smoke-free generation,” said Mayor Emanuel. “We are working closely with retailers, city agencies and Aldermen to enforce these new rules so that we can prevent unlawful and harmful tobacco products from falling into the hands of our children, while keeping communities safe.”

To ensure compliance, the City is working with retailers to ensure that they comply with new legal requirements that take effect July 1, 2016. Tobacco dealers must completely cease the sale of tobacco products and accessories to people under age 21 and train all employees to implement the change. And retailers must post a sign near the point of sale that makes clear that there is a new minimum age.

In addition to providing notification to retailers on the new requirements and terms for compliance, the City will also hold workshop and use social media to increase awareness on new regulations and compliance timeline. BACP will host a workshop on March 18 to describe new regulations that affect Chicago Retail Tobacco License holders. This workshop is geared towards anyone interested in applying for a Retail Tobacco License or businesses that currently sell tobacco products in the City of Chicago.

Enforcement of new regulations will be overseen by the citywide tobacco enforcement unit, a joint initiative by the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP), Chicago Police Department (CPD), and the Department of Buildings. To ensure compliance with the new age

requirement as well as protect youth, BACP will conduct sting operations working with youth participants. If tobacco is sold to a minor, a ticket will be issued. Additionally, businesses failing to display a warning sign with 21 years of age will result in a ticket.

"Raising the minimum age requirement to buy tobacco will hopefully deter teens from even thinking about trying these harmful and addictive products, said BACP Commissioner Maria Guerra Lapacek. "We will be working closely with retailers across the city in the coming months to ensure that they are able to become fully compliant in time for the new law to take hold."

In anticipation of the tobacco prevention reforms, the Mayor last month ordered an expansion of these units to aggressively intervene in businesses which were selling tobacco products illegally. Since that time, the City's tobacco enforcement units have uncovered 762 violations, resulting in the seizure of more than 1,400 packs of unstamped cigarettes.

The tobacco prevention ordinance also mandates new consequences for non-compliance and illegal sales. Once the new law is in effect, retailers in violation will be subject to citations for violation. New fines per the ordinance include an increase of \$1,000 to \$5,000 for a first offense, and \$2,500 to \$10,000 for a second and subsequent offense. Additionally, businesses in violation two or more times within a 48-month period will be subject to license revocation, and potential non-renewal.

These reforms build on previous efforts to reduce youth smoking, and expand taxation on tobacco to smokeless and other products to protect young people who are more vulnerable to nicotine addiction. Nearly \$6 million of the revenue generated by the tax will support a universal freshman orientation program that will provide nearly 20,000 incoming 9th graders at Chicago Public Schools (CPS) high schools with a week of programming that will help them form good study habits, learn the ropes at their new school, and get to know their teachers and peers.

"Because of our city's commitment to the health of all residents, countless young people in our city will now have the chance to grow up free from addiction and the harms posed by tobacco," said Dr. Julie Morita, Commissioner to the Chicago Department of Public Health. "We encourage our merchants to embrace these regulations that will make us one step closer to creating a tobacco-free generation."

Under Mayor Emanuel, Chicago has become a national leader in reducing tobacco use by launching an innovative array of programs and laws. Working with partners in the public health community, the City has helped reduce youth smoking to an all-time low. Following years of tobacco reduction efforts, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found in 2013 that only 10.7 percent of Chicago high school students were smokers—down from 13.6 percent in 2011, when Mayor Emanuel took office.

To report illegal sales, please call 3-1-1, or visit <http://www.checkthestamps.org/>

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