

## UNCOVER THE FACTS: Your compliance according to the 2003 Inspection Report

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Although the rate of tobacco sales to minors continues to fall, alarming trends persist. According to the Idaho Tobacco Project 2003 Annual Report, store clerks continue to sell to minors even after requesting, receiving and reviewing the minors ID. In 2003, tobacco was sold to an inspecting minor 300 times. Of those 300 sales, clerks viewed the minor's identification 208 times (69%). This is a slight increase over the past year during which the clerks requested and received the minor's identification in 67.8% of the sales.



Convenience store/gas stations throughout Idaho carry the most number of permits, but are not the most likely to sell. In fact, of the 1169 completed inspections on convenience store/gas stations, only 171 sold to the inspecting minor. That is a sales rate of 14.63%.

The two business types most likely to fail inspections hold the fewest number of tobacco permits statewide. These business types are the department/discount store and the bar/lounge. Of the 47 completed inspections on department/discount stores, clerks sold to the inspecting minor 13 times (a rate of 27.66%). Of the 87 completed inspections on bar/lounges, 18 sold to the inspecting minors (a rate of 20.69%).

Restaurants are the least likely to sell to minors. Their violation rate was only 10%. Even though some businesses sell more often than others, all tobacco vendors need to remain vigilant and make compliance with tobacco law a priority.

Finally, approximately 70% of all clerks are female. This would make it easy to assume that

females sell more than males - - and on the surface this looks true. Of the 300 sales to minors, 212 sales were committed by females. But, since females are over-represented as clerks, their violation rate is no higher proportionally than males. That is, the violation rate for males and females was not much different. Female clerks sold 15.63% of the time, while male clerks sold 15.38% of the time.

We can then conclude that, for now, the gender of the clerk doesn't seem to make much difference in the sale to minors. Female clerks may feel picked on because they received most of the citations, but it is important to know that male clerks sell at almost an equal rate and also receive citations for their violations.

### What can clerks do to improve?

The first thing that clerks need to conquer is the idea that if a minor presents an ID, it must mean the minor is old enough to buy tobacco. Clerks should NEVER assume the age of a young customer. Always request every customers ID,

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## UNCOVER THE FACTS! *continued*

or at least every customer under the age of 35. Inspect the ID for the tell-tale signs that the customer is under the legal age to buy tobacco. Remember that Idaho ID's are easier than ever to read and do not require the use of math to calculate age. Simply look at the ID's color coding and shape. As a reminder, all ID's issued after 2002 are vertical in shape for all individuals under 21. And regardless of the year an ID was issued, Idaho has maintained the same color-coding system:

- **Green (the minor is under 18):** If the minor is under 18, the ID will have a **green** border around the picture that says "Under 18". Green color-coding means you must refuse the sale. Remember the rhyme: "**If it's green STOP the teen.**"
- **Red (the minor is over 18, but under 21):** If the minor is over the age of 18, but under 21, the ID will have a **red** border around the picture that says "Under 21". Red color-coding means you can sell tobacco to the customer, but not alcohol. Remember the rhyme: "**If it's red use your head.**"

\*Look for our new training poster to be distributed this year!

## What can vendors do to improve?

Vendors must remain diligent in order to successfully avoid violation of the law. Remember that your employees can only do their job if your training procedures and store policies are clear. Your employees need to be clear on the standards and consequences of selling to minors. As a tobacco vendor, you should be asking the following questions:

- Do I have a store policy?
- Are my employees clear on the consequences of selling to minors?
- Do I train my employees on how to spot minor customers, review IDs, refuse the sale to customers with confidence?
- Do I provide my employees with appropriate tools and aids to make identifying minors and refusing the sale an easier task (e.g. cash registers that calculate a customer's age automatically, counter top calendars that specify the year a customer must be born to legally purchase tobacco, posted signs indicating that your business will not sell to minors)?

Successful compliance with the law means identifying areas your business could improve and implement those changes.

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### WHAT'S INSIDE!

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- ◆ 2003 Inspection Report Information

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