Idaho Tobacco Project Maintains High Compliance Rates for Tobacco Vendors

By Cheryl Dudley

Facts and Stats

"C" Average for JULY

According to Idaho Code 39-5701 the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare must inspect each business that sells tobacco to ensure that it does not sell tobacco to minors. In JULY 2007

- ❖ 68 Vendors were inspected.*
- ❖ 16 Vendors sold to the inspecting minor.
- ❖ The compliance rate for the month of July 2007 was 76%

*Inspections where purchase attempts were made.

Prevent the Sale Web site

www.preventthesale.com/idaho

- Learn about the law
- Take the tobacco quiz
- See what the ID's look like
- Play the Game "Would You Sell to This Person?"

An overview of the Idaho Tobacco Project last year

The Idaho Tobacco Project is at work for Idaho citizens. With the goal of preventing the sale of tobacco to minors, preventing illegal Internet tobacco sales, and preventing illegal packaging and non vendor-assisted tobacco sales, the Project has seen a success in Idaho. The compliance rate remains high due to merchant education and increased knowledge about Idaho's law, and each year more vendors take advantage of web-based services. Resources for Idaho vendors include Internet training, the monthly newsletter, legal identification posters, and point of sale resources.

The success of the Project hinges on Inspection teams who randomly inspect tobacco vendors. Inspection teams include one adult inspector, one adult chaperone and a male and female minor. All Inspectors receive taped and direct education and participate in "ride alongs" prior to leading an inspections team. All Inspection team members receive education about the inspection process, the use of legal identification, and safety of the minors prior to conducting any inspections.

How the Inspection Works

The Inspector enters the outlet to determine it is safe for the minor to conduct the inspection. If it is safe, the minor enters the establishment and attempts to purchase a tobacco product. If the clerk asks for identification, the minor hands them their legal driver's license or state issued identification card. If the clerk refuses to sell the product, the minor leaves the store. If the clerk sells the tobacco product, the minor pays for the product and leaves the store. The Inspector leaves the store only after the minor has exited the building.

If no sale was made to the minor or no other violation was found, the inspector reenters the store and gives the clerk a card letting them know they passed the inspection. If a sale is made or another violation is found, the inspector returns to the store, and cites the clerk who sold the product.

Outlet owners are notified of the outcome of the inspection and the penalties incurred.

To make sure you are not fined for selling tobacco to minors, be sure to check the ID of all your customers and refuse the sale to anyone under the age of 18. Its easy to do. All Idaho State issued IDs for minors under 18 will be vertical and have a green border saying "Under 18". It is not necessary to try and calculate age using a customer's birth date, simply look at the ID and the format will tell you all you need to know.

Internet Inspections

Fifty Internet inspections were made in 2006. Several websites identified using Google, were just storefronts for one or more Internet tobacco retailers. Various forms of tobacco from cigarettes, cigars, loose tobacco, and chewing tobacco were purchased. Forty-nine of 50 sites sold tobacco to an inspector. Eleven took electronic checks, but most also took a major credit card.

Internet tobacco sellers are treated as any other un-permitted retailer in state. Sellers failing to acquire a permit are referred to the Idaho Tobacco Project. Forty-eighty businesses required no conclusive age verification. Only one site refused shipment to Idaho.

New Senate Bill Aims to Regulate Tobacco

Democratic senator Edward Kennedy, chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, is sponsoring a bill that would give the Food and Drug Administration authority to regulate tobacco advertising, tobacco ingredients and nicotine levels in tobacco products.

If passed, the bill will give the FDA power to ban tobacco ads aimed at children or appearing in publications read by minors. In addition, the FDA could increase the size of warning labels on tobacco products and regulate industry claims about the reduced risk for products such as light or low-tar cigarettes.

The FDA would also gain the authority to require removal of dangerous additives and to regulate nicotine levels in tobacco products.

Bill oppositionist Michael Enzi of Wyoming is proposing a different bill that would increase cigarette tax to pay for cancer research, and give the FDA authority to ban nicotine.

Tobacco Factoids

- 90% of current smokers began smoking as youth.

- Approximately 1000 of these children, or 5 million children alive today, will eventually die as a result of their smoking.

- The average age of first use of tobacco is now 11-15 years of age.

- The younger a person begins smoking the more likely he/she is to become a heavy smoker.

- The younger a person is when she/he begins smoking, the less likely she/he will be able to quit later.

- Youth tend to underestimate the likelihood that they will become addicted. Almost 75% of youth who smoked daily while they were in high school are still smoking 7 to 9 years later, even though in high school only 5% thought they would be smoking 5 years later.

- Among smokers aged 12-17 years old, 70% already regret their decision to smoke and 66% state that they want to quit.

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Prevent the Sale!
Newsletter for Idaho Tobacco Retailers

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