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TTY Relay 711

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Oregon tobacco retail sales law helps prevent youth tobacco use

Effective Jan. 1, 2022, retailers in Oregon must have a tobacco retail license to sell commercial tobacco products and Inhalant Delivery Systems (IDS, also known as “e-cigarettes” or “vape”), per [Senate Bill 587](#). The new Tobacco Retail License law lets the state more accurately track where tobacco is being sold and ensure that businesses follow tobacco laws, including not selling to people under age 21.

“Nearly 90% of people who use tobacco start before they turn 18. So, this law protects young people’s health today, and reduces the likelihood that they will become addicted to nicotine,” said **Anthony Arton, Public Health Director**. “One in six tobacco retailers inspected in 2019 sold tobacco illegally to people under 21. For flavored products, which are most popular with kids, it was one in five. This law is an important step in stopping those sales.”

The tobacco industry spends more than \$100 million annually on marketing in Oregon, including products and promotions designed to appeal to youth. Tobacco retail licensing has been proven in other states to reduce youth sales and youth tobacco use, putting a wrench in the industry’s tactics. (Oregon was previously one of only seven states that didn’t require a tobacco retail license.)

Retailers can obtain an annual license for \$953 from the Department of Revenue at go.usa.gov/x999. The fee is used entirely to support the cost of running the licensing program and conducting inspections; no other revenues are generated.

There are three exceptions to the law: Retailers operating on tribal lands are exempt. Retailers licensed by the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission or the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program to sell inhalant delivery systems without nicotine are also exempt. Retailers in most counties that already had their own tobacco retail license program will continue to follow county, not state, licensing. See the [Statewide Tobacco Retail License website](#) for details: go.usa.gov/x999.

For the first six months the law is in effect (January 1–June 30, 2022), the Oregon Health Authority and Local Public Health Authorities will conduct outreach to help retailers access education materials and comply with tobacco laws. Free resources for retailers are available at www.healthoregon.org/tobaccoretailsales.

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The law includes real consequences for retailers that don't follow the law, such as fines and/or loss of license. Starting Jan. 1, 2022, the Department of Revenue will begin checking if retailers have a license and will issue penalties if they do not. Public health inspections — and associated penalties — are to ensure that retailers are complying with tobacco laws will begin July 1, 2022.

The law is designed to make enforcement equitable for retailers and communities. Public health specialists, not law enforcement, will conduct inspections, following guidance from racial equity organizations to ensure they do not over-enforce in communities of color and other communities targeted by the tobacco industry. The law also eliminates penalties for youth purchase, use and possession of tobacco products, which will help reduce interactions between youth and police, and put responsibility on those who sell tobacco illegally, not on youth.

For adults who purchase tobacco products, there will be no difference in the sale process. This law does not affect the price of tobacco products.

People who see or experience a retailer selling tobacco products without a license or to someone younger than 21, can report it to Tobacco.Inspections@state.or.us or 971-673-0984.

To learn more about the tobacco retail license and other tobacco prevention efforts in Coos County go to <https://cooshealthandwellness.org/health-promotion/tobacco-prevention-and-education/>.

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