

Protecting Youth from Tobacco in Santa Clara County Fact Sheet

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Visit our website to learn more about what you can do to help prevent kids access to tobacco.

Youth Tobacco Use

- 10.9% of youth in Santa Clara County currently use tobacco products.¹ Nearly 90% of adult smokers in the United States report that they tried their first cigarette before the age of 18.² In Santa Clara County twelve is most common age that youth have tried their first cigarette.³

Tobacco is Accessible to Youth in Stores

- Nearly 40% of Santa Clara County students who report smoking cigarettes within the last 30 days, reported that they acquired them from a store.⁴ Of those who purchased directly from a store, less than a quarter (23%) were asked to show proof of age.⁴

Tobacco Products & Advertising Common Near Schools

- More than a quarter (26.8%) of stores in Santa Clara County that sell tobacco are located within 1,000 feet of a school.⁵
- 59.4% of stores that sell tobacco also sell electronic smoking devices.⁵
- 65.3% of stores surveyed had unhealthy exterior store advertisements for unhealthy products such as tobacco, alcohol, and junk food with tobacco being the number one advertised product.⁵
- 80% of stores that sell tobacco near schools have candy, mint, and liquor flavored non-cigarette tobacco products.⁵

“Our primary goal as health advocates is to prevent kids from starting to smoke by keeping tobacco products out of their hands.”

- Dr. Sara Cody, County Health Officer



A Simple Solution: Tobacco Retail Licensing

- The California state tobacco retail licensing law is insufficient in reducing illegal tobacco sales to minors. Retailers pay an annual fee to the Board of Equalization (BOE), however the funds are used to enforce tobacco tax regulations. This law is **not** used to enforce the tobacco sales to minors law—in fact, no state licensee has ever been penalized by the BOE for selling tobacco to minors.
- Local tobacco retail licensing (TRL) is needed to better enforce sales to minors laws, and include strong enforcement provisions and financial deterrents for violations.
- As of February 2017, the cities of San Jose, Campbell, Morgan Hill, Gilroy, Saratoga and the County of Santa Clara have adopted tobacco retail licensing policies, and several other cities in Santa Clara County are considering adopting similar tobacco retail licensing programs.

The Community Supports Tobacco Retail Licensing

A survey of residents in Santa Clara County conducted in 2016 found:⁶

- 88% of Santa Clara County residents support tobacco retail licensing ordinances.
- 80% of Santa Clara County residents support a law that bans pharmacies from selling tobacco products.
- 62% of Santa Clara County residents support a law to ban the sale of flavored tobacco products.
- 88% of Santa Clara County residents support a law that bans tobacco sales within 1,000 feet of schools.
- 74% of Santa Clara County residents support a law that prohibits stores that sell tobacco from being located within 500 feet of an existing tobacco retailer.



Tobacco Retail Licensing is Effective

Tobacco retail licensing is a self-funded program that gives local jurisdictions the authority to hold retailers accountable for following all laws for selling tobacco, especially laws prohibiting tobacco sales to minors.

As of September 2016, more than 126 cities/towns and counties in California have adopted strong tobacco retail licensing ordinances and have seen the rates of youth access to tobacco reduced dramatically.⁷

Note: Annual fees range from \$30 to \$665 with the majority of fees being between \$200 to \$352.

Before and After Sales Data

City/County	Sales Rate Before TRL	Sales Rate After TRL
San Luis Obispo	17%	0%
City of Berkeley	38%	4.2%
City of San Francisco	22.3%	11.3%
Davis	30.5%	4.7%

For more information or questions, please contact the Center for Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention (CDIP) at 408.793.2700

Sources:

- ¹California Student Tobacco Survey (2016)
- ²Surgeon General Report: Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults (2012)
- ³California Healthy Kids Survey (2009-10)
- ⁴California Healthy Kids Survey (2008)
- ⁵California Department of Public Health Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community Observational Survey (2016)
- ⁶California Department of Public Health Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community Public Opinion Poll (2016)
- ⁷The Center for Tobacco Policy and Organizing (2016)