



Tobacco Retailer Licensing

Tobacco Retailer Licensing Is Effective

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More than 80 communities in California have adopted strong local tobacco retailer licensing ordinances in an effort to reduce illegal sales of tobacco products to minors. These ordinances require tobacco retailers to obtain a license to sell tobacco, include an annual licensing fee high enough to fund strong enforcement programs and include financial deterrents for violators through fines and penalties that include the suspension and revocation of the license.

The table below lists illegal sales rates to minors before and after a strong licensing law was enacted in 31 communities where data is available and enough time (usually at least a year) has passed after the ordinance was enacted to determine results. These sales rates were determined by youth tobacco purchase surveys administered by local agencies. It is important to note that results from the youth tobacco purchase surveys are somewhat dependent on certain factors that differ in each community, such as the age of the youth and the number of stores surveyed.

The results overwhelmingly demonstrate that local tobacco retailer licensing ordinances with strong enforcement provisions are effective. Rates of illegal tobacco sales to minors have decreased, often significantly, in all 31 municipalities with a strong tobacco retailer licensing ordinance where there is before and after youth sales rate data available. However, a licensing ordinance by itself will not automatically decrease sales rates; proper education and enforcement about the local ordinance and state youth access laws are always needed.

For more resources on these ordinances, including the Matrix of Strong Local Tobacco Retailer Licensing Ordinances with policy and enforcement details for every strong ordinance in the state, visit www.Center4TobaccoPolicy.org/localpolicies-licensing. For model tobacco retailer licensing ordinance language, visit the Technical Assistance Legal Center at www.phlpnet.org.

TABLE OF YOUTH SALES RATES BEFORE AND AFTER THE ADOPTION OF A STRONG TOBACCO RETAILER LICENSING ORDINANCE

City/County	Date Passed	Annual Fee	Youth Sales Rate Before Ordinance	Most Recent Youth Sales Rate
Banning	August 2006	\$350	77%	21%
Beaumont	December 2006	\$350	63%	20%
Berkeley	December 2002	\$427*	38%	4.2%
Burbank	February 2007	\$235	26.7%	4%
Calabasas	June 2009	\$0*	30.8%	7%
Coachella	July 2007	\$350	69%	11%
Contra Costa County	January 2003	\$160*	37%	7%
Corona	October 2005	\$350	50%	17%
Davis	August 2007	\$344	30.5%	3.8%
Delano	June 2008	\$165	23%	16%
Desert Hot Springs	August 2007	\$350	48%	4%
El Cajon	June 2004	\$698	40%	4.2%
Elk Grove	September 2004	\$270	17%	0%
Grover Beach	September 2005	\$224	46%	2.9%

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**TABLE OF YOUTH SALES RATES BEFORE AND AFTER THE ADOPTION
OF A STRONG TOBACCO RETAILER LICENSING ORDINANCE (continued)**

City/County	Date Passed	Annual Fee	Youth Sales Rate Before Ordinance	Most Recent Youth Sales Rate
Hollister	May 2006	\$269	33%	4.5%
Kern County	November 2006	\$165	34%	7.5%
La Canada Flintridge	June 2009	\$50*	47.1%	0%
Los Angeles County	December 2007	\$235	30.6%	10.9%
Murrieta	May 2006	\$350	31%	7%
Norco	March 2006	\$350	40%	6%
Pasadena	January 2004	\$225	20%	0%
Riverside	May 2006	\$350	65%	31%
Sacramento	March 2004	\$324	27%	19.7%
Sacramento County	May 2004	\$287	21%	8%
San Fernando	October 2008	\$250	38.5%	3%
San Francisco	November 2003	\$175*	22.3%	13.1%
San Luis Obispo	August 2003	\$255	17%	6.8%
San Luis Obispo County	October 2008	\$342	33.3%	14.3%
Tehachapi	February 2007	\$165	8%	5%
Vista	May 2005	\$250	39%	1.1%
Yolo County	May 2006	\$344	28%	7.9%

*City or County fee does not fully cover administration and enforcement of the tobacco retailer license. Rather, the fee is supplemented with another stable source of funds, such as Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) funds or general funds. See the Center's Matrix of Strong Local Tobacco Retailer Licensing Ordinances for full details about the administration and enforcement of these ordinances.