



## **PROGRAM SUMMARY:**

### **A Tobacco Product Retailing Program for Retail/Vending Industries**

#### **Objectives**

- To continue to discourage those who are underage from purchasing tobacco products.
- To reaffirm that the tobacco industry does not want young people to use tobacco products -- and continues to take affirmative steps to reinforce this position.

#### **Background**

In the face of growing concerns about smoking by those who are underage, the tobacco industry is calling upon the retailers and vending machine operators who sell tobacco products to visibly demonstrate adherence to both state laws and our own conviction that the use of tobacco products is an adult decision.

The issue of smoking by those who are underage is attracting increased attention around the country. In some localities, "sting" operations designed to trap retailers selling tobacco products to those who are underage have been staged. Violators are being prosecuted. The penalties, which vary among localities, may include stiff fines and jail terms. Those who have a retail tobacco license may face the loss of that license.

This program is designed to assist the retailing and vending machine industries, and to enlist their support and cooperation in discouraging the sale of tobacco products to those who are underage.

#### **Participants**

The primary audiences for this tobacco retailing program include:

- Convenience stores
- Grocery stores
- Drug stores
- Discount stores
- Small independent businesses (e.g., "mom and pop stores")
- Gas stations
- Vending machine industry
- Other retail outlets (e.g., truck stops, etc.)

#### **Messages**

This program is designed to convey several messages, including:

- Smoking is an adult custom based on informed choice.

(over please)

- It is against the law in most states to sell tobacco products to those who are underage. Due to growing anti-tobacco activities and the focus on sales to youth, the law can and should be enforced. Retailers are therefore urged to participate in the program.
- Publicly participating in a program such as this can enhance and improve the retailer's image in the community, and help ensure that store owners and employees comply with the law.
- Non-compliance by retailers and the vending machine industry with current laws could lead to tighter restrictions on tobacco sales, including outright bans.

### **Theme**

The theme of the campaign, which will be incorporated into all program materials, is as follows:

**IT'S THE LAW;  
WE DO NOT SELL TOBACCO PRODUCTS  
TO PERSONS UNDER 18**

(OR 19, IF THE STATE LAW DESIGNATES 19 AS THE MINIMUM AGE)

### **Program Materials**

We have designed a package of print and display materials for use by the tobacco product retailer. Materials include:

- A state specific brochure describing the program and applicable laws. The brochure, in addition to detailing minimum age laws for a state and penalties for violation, provides tips to the retailer and the employee on verification of age, acceptable forms of identification, and how to deal with a customer who becomes upset when asked for identification.
- A tip sheet on how to verify age, for display at the cash register as a reminder when employees prepare to ring up a sale.
- Store front and window display signs and point-of-purchase materials, all bearing the program theme: "It's the law: We do not sell tobacco products to persons under 18." These colorful blue, orange and white signs and decals will assist store owners in reminding employees and customers of the state law and their compliance with it.
- Lapel buttons, also using the blue-orange-white colors and the program theme, for store employees to wear while on duty.
- Employee Acknowledgement Form.

Materials are available only in states whose minimum age for purchase of cigarettes is 18 or 19.

### **Distribution**

Distribution will be through the membership of the co-sponsoring organizations. The Tobacco Institute will provide promotional kits in numbers requested by the sponsoring organization. All program materials will be provided at no cost to the co-sponsoring organization and its members.



## Employee Acknowledgement

I have read the "It's the Law" brochure and understand the requirements mandated by state law with respect to the prohibition of the sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18.

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*(Employee)*

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*(Date)*