

County tobacco sales law changes July 1



The sale of tobacco products to persons born after June 30, 1996 is prohibited

This includes **electronic smoking devices**



Per County of Hawaii's Ordinance 13-124 (Effective July 1, 2014), any person who distributes tobacco or electronic cigarette products to any customer who is underage will be subject to a fine of up to \$2,000.



MEDIA RELEASE

Last year, the County Council unanimously approved a bill to raise the age of sale of tobacco products to 21. That measure, Hawaii County Ordinance 13-124, takes effect Tuesday, July 1, 2014.

The law prohibits the distribution of tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices, to underage customers born after June 30, 1996.

Retailers need to be aware that anyone who is born after June 30, 1996 is prohibited from purchasing tobacco products or electronic smoking devices until they are 21 years of age.

There is an exemption in the new ordinance for people who reach the age of 18 before July 1, 2014. Those who reach the age of 18 before July 1, 2014 are allowed to continue to purchase tobacco.

The purpose of the exemption is to ease the transition for people who already use tobacco, and for the retailers.

The Coalition For A Tobacco-Free Hawaii (CTFH) and staff from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids worked closely with West Hawaii Councilmember Dru Mamo Kanuha and his staff to pass this bill. Hawaii County Council unanimously passed Bill 135 on Nov. 20, and Mayor Kenoi signed the legislation into law in Dec. 2013.

The Coalition For A Tobacco-Free Hawaii applauds Hawaii County for standing strong on tobacco control.

According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, "National data show that 95 percent of adult smokers begin smoking before they turn 21."

The ages of 18 to 21 are a critical period when many smokers move from experimental smoking to regular, daily use. Increasing the tobacco sale age to 21 will help prevent young people from ever starting to smoke.

Hawaii County joins New York City and Needham and Canton, Mass., in raising the age of sale on tobacco products to 21. Four states — Utah, New Jersey, Alaska and Alabama — require tobacco buyers to be 19. Several other counties and states, including Texas, are considering similar measures.

It is important for retailers and potential buyers to know these key points for the new law:

* Any person who sells or distributes tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices, to an underage customer will be subject to a fine of up to \$2,000.

* Persons, retailers, and employees that sell or distribute tobacco products must verify proof of age of the recipient/purchaser.

* Sale is prohibited to persons born after June 30, 1996.

* Valid identification includes: state driver's license, state identification card, military ID, or passport.

* Signs are required to be posted at every point of sale.

From July 1, 2014 – July 30, 2017, persons who sell or display tobacco products shall post signs clearly and keep them posted at the place of business at each point of sale.

Failure to post this sign shall be subject to a fine of up to \$500.

Signs were sent to all registered tobacco retailers in May 2014.

Additional signs are available at the Mayor's Offices in East and West Hawaii or by contacting the East Hawaii Tobacco-Free Coalition Coordinator via email at sally@tobaccofreehawaii.org.