

# Lane County Commissioners approve raising the legal age to buy tobacco products to 21

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EUGENE, Ore. – The legal age to buy tobacco in Lane County is rising to 21 beginning April 13.

Tuesday, Lane County Commissioners and the Board of Health voted to raise the legal age to purchase tobacco products.

Tobacco products include electronic smoking devices and any component or accessory used in the preparation or consumption of tobacco products, such as filters, rolling papers, pipes, and substances used in electronic smoking devices, whether or not they contain nicotine.

The ordinance includes an exemption allowing licensed retail outlet employees between the ages of 18 and 21 to sell tobacco products for their employers.

Tobacco users currently between the ages of 18 and 21 will not be exempt from the new ordinance. The city council was considering a grandfather period where the new ordinance would not apply to those currently between the ages of 18 and 21.

"Many kids 18 to 21 who would start or continue use of tobacco during the grandfathering period will wish they had never started," said Tamara Miller, a Eugene resident.

[Lane County is the first county in Oregon to pass such an ordinance.](#)

The ordinance is a step toward reducing tobacco use, a priority identified in the adopted Community Health Improvement Plane. Raising the legal age has been shown to be an effective way to reduce youth smoking and

other forms of tobacco use.

"Addictions are something that as a board of health, we need to help people in every single way that we possibly can to overcome their addictions because they are expensive for society to deal with," said Pat Farr, Lane County Commissioner.