

# Orange County raising tobacco purchase age to 21

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By Mid-Hudson News Network and Freeman staff



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GOSHEN >> The minimum age for buying tobacco products in Orange County is rising from 18 to 21.

The county Legislature approved the change on Thursday, and County Executive Steven Neuhaus is expected to sign the measure.

The law is to take effect on June 1, 2017, and retailers who violate it could be fined up to \$1,500.

Bill sponsor James DiSalvo, a Highland Falls Republican, said even if only a handful of lives can be saved by keeping young people away from smoking, the effort will have been worthwhile.

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Legislator Chris Eachus, D-New Windsor, said the next step in the effort to keep tobacco out of the hands of young people is to enact a local law to move tobacco advertising out of their line of sight.

There currently are nine other counties in New York state where the minimum age for buying tobacco products is 21: Albany, Schenectady, Chautauqua, Suffolk and the five counties that make up New York City. In Onondaga and Nassau counties, the minimum age is 19. All other New York counties allow the purchases at age 18.

California and Hawaii have enacted statewide laws banning the sale of tobacco products to anyone under 21, though California's statute excludes active-duty military personnel.