

Tobacco Retailer Licensing Is Effective



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In California, 144 communities have adopted strong local tobacco retailer licensing ordinances in an effort to reduce illegal sales of tobacco products to minors. That includes the following four components:

- License that all retailers must obtain in order to sell tobacco products and that must be renewed annually.
- A fee set high enough to sufficiently fund an effective program including administration of the program and enforcement efforts. An enforcement plan, that includes compliance checks, should be clearly stated.
- Coordination of tobacco regulations so that a violation of any existing local, state or federal tobacco regulation violates the license.
- A financial deterrent through fines and penalties including the suspension and revocation of the license. Fines and penalties should be outlined in the ordinance.

The table below lists illegal sales rates to minors before and after a strong licensing law was enacted. 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 have a number of different factors that influence change. Results from these 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. Furthermore, other factors that could impact these rates include statewide laws, other city policies, or statewide or national media campaigns. The data below shows that these decreases occur after a tobacco retailer license has

been established. 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 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.

Before and after youth sales rate data is available for the following 41 California communities with strong licensing ordinances- Banning, Baldwin Park, Beaumont, Berkeley, Burbank, Calabasas, Carpentaria, Coachella, Contra Costa County, Corona, Davis, Delano, Desert Hot Springs, El Cajon, Elk Grove, Goleta, Grass Valley, Grover Beach, Kern County, La Canada Flintridge, Los Angeles County, Morgan Hill, Murrieta, Norco, Oroville, Pasadena, Riverside, Rosemead, Sacramento, Sacramento County, San Fernando, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Luis Obispo County, Santa Barbara County, Sonoma County, Tehachapi, Vista, Winters, Woodland, and Yolo County.

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

For model tobacco retailer licensing ordinance language, visit ChangeLab Solutions at changelabsolutions.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%
Baldwin Park	October 2008	\$342	34%	9%
Beaumont	December 2006	\$350	63%	20%
Berkeley	December 2002	\$427*	38%	4.2%
Burbank	February 2007	\$235	26.7%	5%
Calabasas	June 2009	\$0*	30.8%	5%
Carpentaria	April 2012	\$379	26%	7%
Coachella	July 2009	\$350	69%	11%
Contra Costa County	January 2003	\$160*	37%	13%
Corona	October 2005	\$350	50%	17%
Davis	August 2007	\$377	30.5%	12%
Delano	June 2008	\$165	23%	5.6%
Desert Hot Springs	August 2007	\$350	48%	4%
El Cajon	June 2004	\$698	40%	1%
Elk Grove	September 2004	\$270	17%	16.7%
Goleta	May 2014	\$534	21%	7%
Grass Valley	November 2009	\$100	27%	0%
Grover Beach	September 2005	\$244	46%	17%
Kern County	November 2006	\$165	34%	13.3%
La Canada Flintridge	June 2009	\$50*	47.1%	0%
Los Angeles County	December 2007	\$235	30.6%	8%
Morgan Hill	April 2014	\$125	15%	0%
Murrieta	May 2006	\$350	31%	7%
Norco	March 2006	\$350	40%	6%
Oroville	March 2013	\$30	22.6%	0%
Pasadena	January 2004	\$225	29%	0%
Riverside	May 2006	\$350	65%	31%
Rosemead	July 2017	\$235	32%	22%
Sacramento	March 2004	\$324	27%	15.1%
Sacramento County	May 2004	\$287	21%	7.1%
San Fernando	October 2008	\$250	38.5%	3%
San Francisco	November 2003	\$175*	22.3%	13.4%
San Luis Obispo	August 2003	\$255	17%	13%
San Luis Obispo County	October 2008	\$342	33.3%	5%
Santa Barbara County	November 2010	\$235	21%	3%
Sonoma County	April 2016	\$350	18.4%	1.3%
Tehachapi	February 2007	\$165	8%	16.7%
Vista	May 2005	\$250	39%	1.9%
Winters	January 2016	\$377	47%	19%
Woodland	June 2015	\$377	32%	8%
Yolo County	May 2006	\$377	28%	7.8%

*City or County fee does not fully cover administration and enforcement of the tobacco-retailer license. Rather, the fee is supplemental with another stable source of funds, such as the 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.