

# Oregon Tobacco Enforcement Report

August 2020

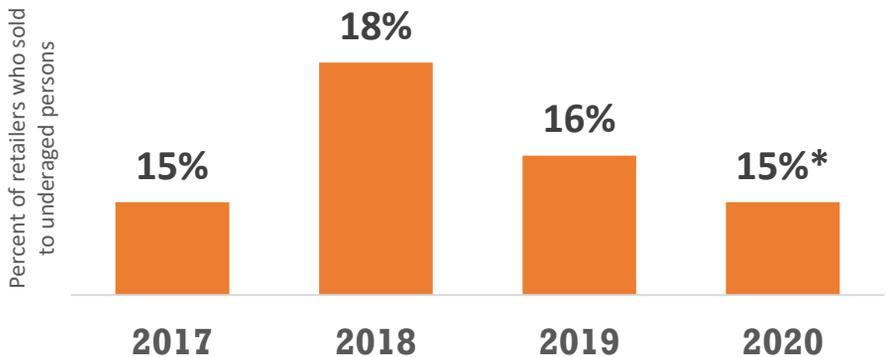


## Description

The sale of tobacco products and inhalant delivery systems (IDS) to persons under 21 years of age is prohibited by Oregon law. The OHA Public Health Division and law enforcement conduct random, unannounced inspections for retailers of tobacco products and IDS, such as e-cigarettes. This is done to ensure compliance with laws that prohibit the sale of tobacco products to underage persons.

Oregon is one of only eight states that does not require a license to sell tobacco products, also known as “tobacco retail licensing”. Tobacco license systems can support retailer accountability by imposing effective penalties, including the suspension of tobacco licenses for retailers who violate the law. Licensing holds the store owner accountable for what happens in their business, rather than imposing a fine on the individual clerk who sells to an underage person.

## Sales to underage persons over time



## Fines

Oregon retailers must check all persons who appear to be under the age of 27 for valid ID before selling them tobacco products.

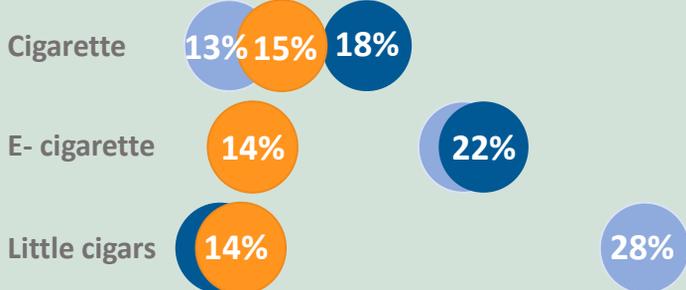
During the inspection, if the store makes an illegal sale, the Oregon State Police issue a citation to the store clerk, manager or owner.

## Youth marketing

Research shows that if people do not start smoking before they turn 19, they are less likely to ever start, making young people key targets of the tobacco industry. The tobacco industry surrounds young people with marketing and promotes products with flavors that appeal to youth. While youth use of cigarettes has decreased, use of other tobacco and nicotine products, such as e-cigarettes and small cigars, has increased. In Fall 2019, IDS use by youth and adult users resulted in an outbreak of e-cigarette or vaping use-associated lung injury (EVALI). In response, OHA launched a public education campaign for youth and parents in 2020.

## 2018, 2019 and 2020\* sales to underage persons varied by product type

Sales of cigarettes decreased from 2018. Sales of e-cigarettes declined dramatically in 2020, possibly due to attention around EVALI and COVID-19 impacts. Sales violations of little cigars and cigarillos varied widely.



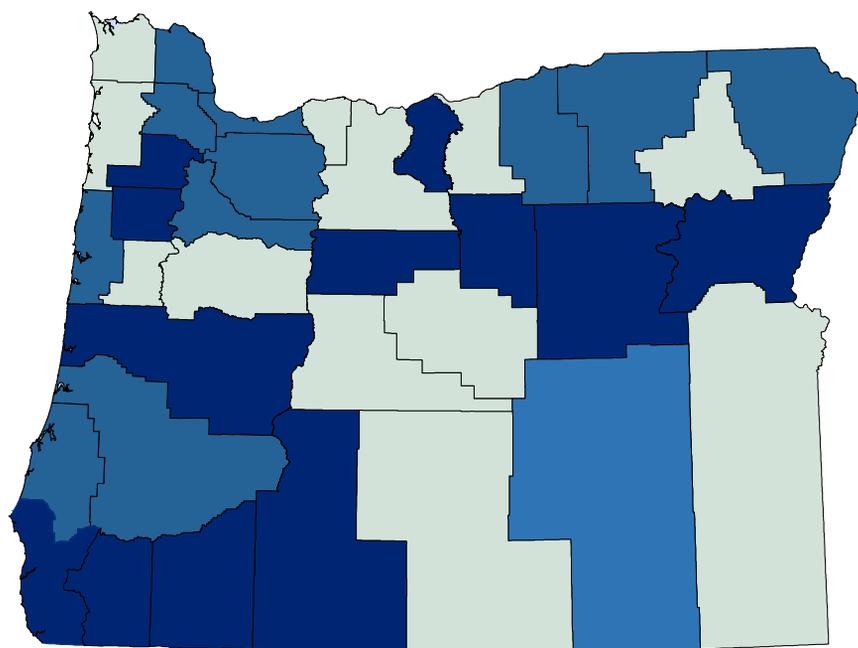
\* 2020 inspections were paused in mid-March because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this graph, 2020 represents completed inspections only, 68% of total planned inspections for the 2019-2020 Oregon State fiscal year.

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## The retail environment

Tobacco companies spend over \$100 million per year in Oregon, much of it in the retail environment, to market their products. Higher exposure to tobacco marketing in the retail space is associated with increased tobacco use. Tobacco products are cheap, readily available and easy to get, and are heavily promoted and marketed in stores where youth frequent.

Sales to underage persons are highest in tobacco and vape shops where flavored products that appeal to youth are sold.



Sales to underage persons vary by county (2017-2020).



## Proven tobacco control policies with regular enforcement result in fewer illegal sales.

Studies show that implementation of strong tobacco control policies along with active enforcement, effective retailer education and leadership support are essential to success in reducing youth tobacco use. Specifically, tobacco retail licensing creates a straightforward method for tracking businesses that sell tobacco products and inhalant delivery systems and holding businesses accountable to sales laws.

For more information on this report contact: us at:

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