



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE • COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 70-10-DES

DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

RETAIL TOBACCO PERMITTING PROGRAM

Riverside County Ordinance 838.1 requires tobacco retailers to be permitted, inspected, and regulated by the Department of Environmental Health. The ordinance applies to all unincorporated areas as well as most incorporated cities throughout the county.

The retailer must first have a permit from the California Board of Equalization to sell tobacco and/or tobacco paraphernalia. The retailer is then eligible for a Tobacco Retail Permit from the Department of Environmental Health. This annual permit is non-transferable, and specific to the location listed on the permit.

The Department of Environmental Health staff will inspect the retail store periodically to promote compliance with state, local and federal laws.

There will also be unannounced decoy operations at each retail site. The purpose of this program is to prevent the selling of tobacco and tobacco paraphernalia to minors (under the age of 18). The minor decoys will act as normal customers asking to buy tobacco products. Employees should be trained to verify a valid identification for all tobacco transactions to ensure minors are not sold tobacco or tobacco paraphernalia. By law, the decoys are allowed to lie about their age, but are not allowed to show false identification. The decoy operations may also be conducted in conjunction with other regulatory agencies and include additional penalties to those imposed by Environmental Health:

- **1st violation:** one (1) day suspension of tobacco and paraphernalia sales and an administrative citation.
- **2nd violation within a sixty-month (60) period:** thirty (30) day suspension of tobacco and paraphernalia sales and an administrative citation.
- **3rd violations within a sixty-month (60) period:** ninety (90) day suspension of tobacco and paraphernalia sales and an administrative citation.
- **4 or more violations within a sixty-month (60) period:** five (5) year suspension of tobacco and paraphernalia sales and an administrative citation.

Along with the above penalties, the operator's Tobacco Retail Permit will be revoked. The operator must apply for a new permit after each revocation and the suspension of sales is complete. The operator may not sell any tobacco or paraphernalia until a new permit is obtained. Additionally, substantial civil penalties may be assessed and inventory impounded as determined by the Department of Environmental Health.

OFFICES IN: RIVERSIDE, BLYTHE, CORONA, HEMET, INDIO, MURRIETA AND PALM SPRINGS
For more information call (888) 722-4234

Department Web Site – www.rivcoeh.org



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Some important facts to note:

- No self-service of tobacco is allowed under this ordinance. This includes vending machines. All transactions must take place with the assistance of an employee/clerk.
- Mobile sales are not allowed. This includes carts, vehicles, community, or temporary events. All sales must be from a fixed location and that location must be the location listed on the Board of Equalization permit and the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health Tobacco Retail Permit.
- Each employee or clerk selling tobacco must be at least 18 years of age.
- There must be a public notification sign posted at each point of purchase. The sign must contain the following words in bold print of contrasting color: “The Sale of Tobacco Products to Persons Under 18 Years of Age Is Prohibited by Law and Subject to Penalties. Valid Identification May Be Required. To Report an Unlawful Tobacco Sale Call 1-800-5ASK-4-ID. Business and Professions Code Section 22952.” The sign must be square (at least 5.5 inches by 5.5 inches) or rectangular (3.66 inches by 8.5 inches).
- Cigarettes must be sold in packs of at least 20. “Roll your own tobacco” must be sold in quantities of at least 0.60 ounces or more.

For more information on *California State Board of Equalization*: www.boe.ca.gov

For more information regarding *Riverside County Department of Environmental Health*: www.rivcoeh.org

*Document available in an alternate format upon request