

Commonwealth of Virginia Tobacco 21 FAQ

WHAT IS THE NEW TOBACCO 21 LAW?

A person may not sell to, distribute to, purchase for, or permit the purchase of any **tobacco, nicotine vapor, or alternative tobacco product** to anyone under the age of 21. Also, no one under the age of 21 may purchase, use or possess any tobacco, nicotine vapor, or alternative tobacco product.

WHY TOBACCO 21?

- Tobacco kills over 480,000 people each year, more than automobile crashes, gun violence and opiate overdoses combined. 10,300 of those deaths occur in Virginia. Virginia spends more than \$3 Billion in healthcare costs for smoking-related diseases each year. (CDC.gov)
- The developing teenage brain is particularly vulnerable to the effects of nicotine.
- More than 95% of addicted smokers start before age 21.
- 350 youth become regular smokers each day in the U.S.
- Early exposure to nicotine increases the risk of addiction and puts adolescents at a higher risk for depression, anxiety and substance abuse.

WHEN DOES THIS LAW GO INTO EFFECT?

The law was signed into law on February 21, 2019 by Governor Ralph Northam and will go into effect **July 1, 2019**.

ARE THERE ANY EXEMPTIONS TO THIS LAW?

Active duty military personnel who are 18 years of age or older may purchase tobacco, nicotine vapor, and alternative tobacco products. The **ONLY** accepted proof of age for this exemption is an identification card issued by the Armed Forces of the United States.

IS THERE GRANDFATHERING INCLUDED IN THE LAW?

No. There is no grandfathering clause in the law. If you are not 21 or older as of July 1, 2019, you will not be able to purchase, use, or possess any tobacco or nicotine product.

WHAT PRODUCTS ARE AFFECTED?

Any product made of tobacco including **cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, pipe tobacco, bidis, and wrappings**. Also included are any noncombustible products containing nicotine that use a heating element or power source to produce vapor from nicotine in a solution or other form. This includes **any electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, or similar product and any cartridge of nicotine in solution or other form, including JUUL and like products**. Alternative nicotine products are also included in the new law. These include any noncombustible **product that contains nicotine whether chewed, absorbed, dissolved, or ingested**.

WHAT IS THE PENALTY FOR PURCHASE, USE, OR POSSESSION BY SOMEONE UNDER THE AGE OF 21?

If an individual under the age of 21 is found in violation of the law a civil penalty not to exceed \$100 for the first violation, not to exceed \$250 for a second and subsequent violation will be issued. A court may, as an alternative to the civil penalty, require up to 20 hours of community service for the first violation and up to 40 hours community service for a second and subsequent violation.

See Reverse Side for Additional Information

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WHAT IS MY ROLE IN TOBACCO 21?

Adults play an important role in protecting youth from nicotine addiction and the deadly effects of tobacco and nicotine use and can help prevent our youth from becoming the next generation to die prematurely from tobacco and nicotine-related disease. Do not purchase or provide tobacco or nicotine products to anyone under the age of 21. If you suspect a retailer of selling to underage youth, please report them by calling your local Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) office which can be found at: <https://www.abc.virginia.gov/enforcement/bureau-of-law-enforcement/regional-offices>

WHAT IF I WANT TO QUIT?

For free and personalized support in quitting, anyone 13+ can contact the Quit Now QuitLine 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

