



Manhattan Beach Tobacco Youth Purchase Survey 2015

Illegal Tobacco Sales to Youth are a Problem

Although it has been illegal to sell tobacco to minors in California for over 100 years, retailers continue to sell tobacco to youth. In fact, kids in the U.S. smoke more than 920 million packs of cigarettes each year. In addition, 28.9% of current smokers among high school students in Los Angeles reported directly purchasing their cigarettes from stores or gas stations.

Youth Purchase Surveys

Youth Purchase Surveys (YPSs) have proven to be an invaluable source of data to support comprehensive efforts to decrease youth tobacco use. Specifically, YPS data assist community leaders and decision-makers in raising awareness about the problem of youth access to tobacco and generating innovative policy solutions to preventing youth smoking.

YPSs involve youth aged 15 to 17 going into stores and attempting to buy tobacco products. A comprehensive “attempted buy” protocol was developed by the Department of Public Health’s Tobacco Control and Prevention Program to assess rates of retailers willing to sell tobacco products to minors. Subcontractors working in Manhattan Beach received training with the protocol and subsequently trained youth and adult participants in conducting the YPSs.

This report presents YPS data collected in Manhattan Beach in September 2015. A total of 18 retailers were surveyed, including liquor stores, small grocers/delis, drugstores/pharmacies, and supermarkets. Youth attempted to buy cigarettes at these retailers.

Retailers Willing to Sell Tobacco to Minors

11% (2/18) of Manhattan Beach retailers approached were willing to sell tobacco products to minors. This rate translates into the retailer’s willingness to sell tobacco products illegally to approximately 1 in 10 youth.