



Tobacco Retailer Compliance Survey Results 2022

1.0 Introduction

The *Tobacco Products Control Act 2006* (the Act) prohibits the sale and supply of tobacco products to anyone under 18 years of age. This is an important part of the Act which aims to reduce smoking among young people. The Tobacco Retailer Compliance Survey (the survey) is used to measure retailers' compliance with the Act, by determining the proportion of retailers willing to sell cigarettes to children. This bulletin summarises the methods and results of the survey conducted in 2022 and sets out future directions to further improve tobacco retailers' compliance with the Act.

2.0 Survey method

The survey took place in the latter half of 2022. Controlled purchase officers (CPOs) were recruited and trained. The CPOs were eight teenagers (four females and four males) aged 15 to 16 years. The CPO's role was to visit allocated retail outlets and ask to buy a packet of cigarettes. A survey about the purchase attempt was completed after each visit. A total of 1,002 purchase attempts were made across 514 stores around the Perth metropolitan area.

3.0 Results

3.1 Level of compliance

- 12 per cent (1 in 8) of purchase attempts resulted in the sale of cigarettes to a CPO.
- 79 per cent (almost 4 out of 5) of stores complied with the Act by not selling cigarettes to CPOs during the survey period.
- 19 per cent of stores surveyed (100 stores) sold cigarettes to a CPO on one occasion during the survey period; and 2 per cent of stores surveyed (9 stores) sold cigarettes to a CPO on 2 occasions.

Table 1: Summary of purchase attempts

| Total number of stores surveyed and purchase attempts | Did not sell cigarettes | Sold cigarettes to a CPO on one occasion | Sold cigarettes to a CPO on 2 occasions |
|---|-------------------------|--|---|
| 514 stores | 396 stores (79%) | 100 stores (19%) | 9 stores (2%) |
| 1,002 attempts | 884 attempts (88%) | 100 attempts (10%) | 18 attempts (2%) |

3.2 Retailers response to request to purchase cigarettes

- CPOs were asked for identification (ID), asked their age, or if they were 18 years old on 94 per cent of purchase attempts (940 attempts).
- CPOs were specifically asked for ID during 83 per cent of purchase attempts (828 attempts). This was the most common question CPOs were asked at point-of-sale.
- However, 12 sales were completed (cigarettes were sold to the CPO), even after the CPO was asked for ID but did not present any.

Table 2: Summary of purchase attempts by questions asked at point-of-sale

| Question asked at point-of-sale | Purchase attempts where cigarettes were sold to CPO | Purchase attempts where cigarettes were not sold to CPO | Total purchase attempts |
|---------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| Asked CPO for ID | 12 | 816 | 828 |
| Asked CPO their age | 1 | 72 | 73 |
| Asked CPO if they were 18 years | 1 | 38 | 39 |

3.3 Likelihood of sales to children

In 2022, sales of cigarettes to children (CPOs) were generally highest when:

- the retailer was male (15 per cent, versus 10 per cent female retailers)
- the CPO purchase was from a café, deli, lunch bar or kiosk, or other (e.g. convenience store or general store)
- the CPO was not asked for ID or their age.

Table 3: Summary of purchase attempts where cigarettes were sold by type of retailer (%)

| Café | Deli/kiosk/lunch bar | Supermarket | Newsagent/Lottery | Service Station | Tobacconist | Other ⁺ |
|------|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|
| 29%* | 15% | 12% | 11% | 10% | 9%* | 24% ⁺ |

*Note: the sample size was significantly smaller than other types of outlets (< 25)

⁺Other included Convenience stores, General stores, Fruit and vegetables, Takeaway, Bakery or Roadhouse.

4.0 Conclusion

To help further improve compliance with the Act and reduce sales of cigarettes to children, two priority areas include:

- ID Checks: all sales staff should be encouraged to ID check customers who look under the age of 25 years, and decline the sale if ID is not able to be provided, as recommended in the [Guide for selling tobacco products in WA](#).
- Training and supervision: retailers and their sales staff require ongoing training and supervision to remain well informed of their legal obligations when selling cigarettes. Training should be repeated every 6 months.

For more information on selling tobacco products in Western Australia and the Tobacco Retailer Compliance Survey, visit the WA Department of Health website: ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Health-for/Environmental-Health-practitioners/Tobacco.

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