



Understanding the Electronic Cigarettes Marketplace in Canada

There are many questions being raised about the sale of electronic cigarettes in Canada. The purpose of this document is to outline or clarify for convenience store retailers the current legal environment regarding the products and also identify what the Canadian Convenience Stores Association (CCSA) recommends as best practices regarding their sale.

The law

The sale of nicotine-loaded electronic cigarettes is not authorized in Canada however the regulations are not being strictly enforced. Also, convenience store retailers are permitted to sell these products without nicotine. It is illegal in Canada to make any health claims about e-cigarettes, for example suggesting they are a smoking cessation tool.

Currently, there is no age-restriction on the sale of non-nicotine-loaded e-cigarettes sold in Canada.

The lack of clear, concise regulation regarding e-cigarettes has caused parents, health advocates and governments across the country to raise concerns about how these products should be treated.

Recommended best practices for sale

Convenience store operators are responsible retailers and conduct more face-to-face age-verification checks than anyone in the world. Given the uncertain status of e-cigarettes, the CCSA recommends that convenience stores treat these products in the same manner they treat tobacco products. As such, the Association has put together the following best practice recommendations for convenience store retailers in Canada so that they may show their commitment to responsible retailing practices:

1. Convenience retailers should follow the applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws for verifying the age of purchasers of tobacco and apply those standards to the sale of e-cigarettes.
2. Convenience retailers should always ask any person who looks to be under the age of 25 to provide valid, government-issued photo ID to establish proof of age.
3. Convenience retailers should ensure all staff are properly and regularly trained on age-verification practices provided through education tools like the CCSA's We Expect ID training program which is designed to ensure convenience store employees understand all federal and provincial laws related to the sale of tobacco products.
4. Convenience retailers should display all proper signage, including posters, stickers and decals, such as those offered through the We Expect ID program, that convey the message that your store will not sell age-restricted products to minors and will only sell age-restricted products to customers who can show proper ID.