

# Six Nations tobacco industry doesn't sell to minors

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-increase the price of "Rollies" (bag cigarettes) to increase competition between products

But an independent survey by Turtle Island News found of 36 smoke shops surveyed all of them already imposed age restrictions on tobacco product sales and posted signs restricting the sales

There are 101 smoke shops on Six Nations, according to the report.

The Turtle Island News survey of 36 smoke shops found every single one of them had a policy in place to not sell cigarettes to minors and required I.D. if a customer appeared to be

under 19 years of age.

Ten of those smoke shops already had signs insisting that customers show proof of age if they appear to be under 19.

Another 11 freely accepted a sign from the Turtle Island News posting their policy of not selling to minors.

Only one smoke shop would not put up the sign because the owner was not available to approve it.

At one shop a handmade sign hangs on the door reading "Must have I.D. for proof of age."

A store employee said underage kids trying to buy tobacco products is a daily occurrence but "rules are rules." After being denied, she said, "a lot of kids walk

out mad."

A number of smoke shop employees said they don't even get minors coming into their stores.

Laurie Reed, manager of Factory Direct smokes, is one of those employees.

"We haven't really had anyone that looked younger than 19 come in to purchase smokes," she said. "If someone that I thought was younger than 19, I definitely would ask them how old they are. But I've never had that happen to me; never had any children come in. Mostly everyone who comes in is 40 and above. I know that myself or my sister or daughter-in-law would never sell cigarettes to minors."

She readily agreed to post a sign on the front counter stating they do not sell to minors.

A male employee at I.Q. Tobacco on Hwy. 54 had young male teenagers come in looking to buy cigarettes but say they forgot their I.D. when asked. "I ask them for I.D. and they say, 'oh no, I don't have any,' but yet they leave and they jump in their car and drive away. So you're going to tell me you drove all the way out here with no license? That's what gets me."

When told of Turtle Island News random survey, Dr. Kandasamy said it's a combination of both parental supervision and accessibility to tobacco that might

lead a young child to smoke.

"It is believed that parental supervision does play a big role," said Dr. Kandasamy. "Although children aged five to 10 would not necessarily be able to purchase directly from a smoke shop, they might have older siblings that can. The main issue here is easy access to cigarettes (whether it is in the home or outside of the home)."

She continued, "We cannot put blame solely on parents/caregivers, nor can we fully blame smoke shops. It is shared responsibility between the home and the community to set a healthy example for the younger generation."

The Ontario government places harsh penalties on store owners who are caught selling cigarettes to minors.

The fine for any store convicted of selling tobacco products to minors in Ontario is \$5000, according to the provincial Ministry of Finance, which governs the tobacco industry under the Tobacco Tax Act and Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

Off-reserve, in 2008, the overall rate of non-compliance throughout the Province of Ontario on selling tobacco to underage youth was 10 per cent, according to the Ministry of Finance.-With files from Chase Jarrett, Lynda Powell and TIN staff-