



Report on the Tobacco Compliance Survey 2015

1.0 Introduction

The *Tobacco Products Control Act 2006* (the Act) prohibits the sale and supply of tobacco products to children, an important strategy to reduce the number of young people who smoke. The Tobacco Compliance Survey is used to measure retailers' compliance with the Act, by determining the proportion of retailers who are willing to sell cigarettes to children. This report summarises the methods, results and trends of the 2015 survey and sets out future directions for further improving the compliance rate of tobacco retailers to the Act.

2.0 Survey method

The 2015 survey took place between 25 September and 10 October 2015. Eight suitable 15 and 16 year olds (4 females, 4 males) were recruited and trained to act as Controlled Purchase Officers (CPOs). The role of the CPO was to visit their allocated retail outlets and ask for a packet of cigarettes. After each visit, they completed a survey. In total, 1008 purchase attempts were made across 541 stores.

3.0 Results

3.1 Level of compliance

16% of all purchase attempts resulted in the sale of cigarettes to a minor.

This is a significant reduction from the success rate in 2013 (29 per cent), as well as all previous studies (27 per cent in 2011; 36 per cent in 2004; 45 per cent in 2002). The successful sales occurred across 27 per cent of the stores audited. Again, this is a significant improvement on 2013 (42 per cent) and all previous years (39 per cent noncompliance in 2011, 53 per cent in 2004; 70 per cent in 2002).

This improvement has been driven by a significant increase in the number of retailers asking for ID, requested in 79 per cent of all purchase attempts (versus 66 per cent in 2013, 59 per cent in 2011, and 54 per cent in 2004). It has also significantly increased as the leading reason for a sale refusal.

Purchase Attempts	2015 n=1008	2013 n=1000	2011 n=1002	2004 n=965	2002 n=1047
Unsuccessful purchase %	84	71	73	64	55
Successful purchase %	16	29	27	36	45

3.2 CPOs' findings

Retailers who sold cigarettes made it easy for CPOs to make their purchases.

Consistent with previous years, those who successfully purchased cigarettes were more likely to describe the purchase attempt as "easy" and the retail staff as "friendly". However, CPOs were overall less likely to have an "easy" or "friendly" purchase experience in 2015, regardless of whether or not a purchase attempt was successful.

Those CPOs who successfully bought cigarettes were also less likely to be asked for ID or their age, compared to those who were unsuccessful. This again matches previous findings and continues to suggest that a small minority of retailers are either ignoring licensing information, or require further training about the Act and the possible penalties for noncompliance.

Purchase Attempts	Successful purchase %	Unsuccessful purchase %
Very/quite easy attempt	85 *	33
Very/quite friendly staff	71 *	45
Asked for ID	5	93 *
Asked age	0	7 *
Asked if 18	0	4 *

* Significant differences between successful and unsuccessful purchase

4.0 Significant trends

4.1 Circumstances in which sales to minors were highest

- among cafés, delis, lunch bars and kiosks compared to other types of retailers
- among male purchasers rather than females**
- in situations where no other customers were present within the store
- during later hours of the day, particularly 3pm onwards
- in specific pockets of locations within Perth, including a trend toward Perth's inner northern and western suburbs

Type of Retail Outlet %						
Cafe	Deli/lunch bar/ kiosk	Newsagent/ lottery centre	Department store	Service station	Supermarket	Tobacconist
31	21 *	18	17	14 *	13 *	11

4.2 Trend changes between 2013 and 2015

- Delis/lunch bars/kiosks were significantly more likely than service stations and supermarkets to be noncompliant in 2015, but there were no significant differences between retailer types in 2013 or 2011.
- In all previous years the success rate has been higher among female purchasers rather than male purchasers, but this trend reversed in 2015.**
- The presence of other customers in the store had no influence on compliance in 2013; however, this did have an influence in 2011 and 2015.
- Time of day had no influence on compliance in 2013, although in 2011 and 2015 compliance was similarly found to be highest during morning hours.
- In 2013, younger retailers estimated to be less than 20 years of age were significantly more likely to be noncompliant. In 2015 however, there were no significant differences between retailer age groups but noncompliance reduced significantly across all retailer age groups.

Number of customers in the store%	
No customers	1+ Customers
19 *	14

Time of the day %					
8.30am to 10.20am	10.30am to 11.59am	12noon to 1.29pm	1.30pm to 2.59pm	3pm to 4.29am	4.30am to 6pm
10 *	17	15	19 *	30 *	25

* significant difference at 95% confidence interval

5.0 Conclusion

While the 2015 results show very positive improvements in levels of compliance, several new priority areas for future education and targeting can be identified to help further improve retailers' compliance with the Act and reduce the number of young people who smoke. These priority areas are:

- type of retailer (cafes, lunch bars, kiosks)
- time of day (afternoon to evening)
- retailer interaction with <18 year-olds (ask for ID and age, make it less easy to buy)
- location of retailers (eg Perth's inner suburbs)

These priority areas will be tackled by:

- Conducting further retailer training
- Publishing and disseminating the results of the compliance survey
- Conducting controlled purchase operations
- Continued compliance inspections of retail outlets



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