

461.12 MUNICIPAL TOBACCO LICENSE.

Subdivision 1. **Authorization.** A town board or the governing body of a home rule charter or statutory city may license and regulate the retail sale of tobacco as defined in section 609.685, subdivision 1, and establish a license fee for sales to recover the estimated cost of enforcing this chapter. The county board shall license and regulate the sale of tobacco in unorganized territory of the county and in a town or a home rule charter or statutory city if the town or city does not license and regulate retail tobacco sales. Retail establishments licensed by a town or city to sell tobacco are not required to obtain a second license for the same location under the licensing ordinance of the county.

Subd. 2. **Administrative penalties; licensees.** If a licensee or employee of a licensee sells tobacco to a person under the age of 18 years, or violates any other provision of this chapter, the licensee shall be charged an administrative penalty of \$75. An administrative penalty of \$200 must be imposed for a second violation at the same location within 24 months after the initial violation. For a third violation at the same location within 24 months after the initial violation, an administrative penalty of \$250 must be imposed, and the licensee's authority to sell tobacco at that location must be suspended for not less than seven days. No suspension or penalty may take effect until the licensee has received notice, served personally or by mail, of the alleged violation and an opportunity for a hearing before a person authorized by the licensing authority to conduct the hearing. A decision that a violation has occurred must be in writing.

Subd. 3. **Administrative penalty; individuals.** An individual who sells tobacco to a person under the age of 18 years must be charged an administrative penalty of \$50. No penalty may be imposed until the individual has received notice, served personally or by mail, of the alleged violation and an opportunity for a hearing before a person authorized by the licensing authority to conduct the hearing. A decision that a violation has occurred must be in writing.

Subd. 4. **Minors.** The licensing authority shall consult with interested educators, parents, children, and representatives of the court system to develop alternative penalties for minors who purchase, possess, and consume tobacco. The licensing authority and the interested persons shall consider a variety of options, including, but not limited to, tobacco free education programs, notice to schools, parents, community service, and other court diversion programs.

Subd. 5. **Compliance checks.** A licensing authority shall conduct unannounced compliance checks at least once each calendar year at each location where tobacco is sold to test compliance with section 609.685. Compliance checks must involve minors over the age of 15, but under the age of 18, who, with the prior written consent of a parent or guardian, attempt to purchase tobacco under the direct supervision of a law enforcement officer or an employee of the licensing authority.

Subd. 6. **Defense.** It is an affirmative defense to the charge of selling tobacco to a person under the age of 18 years in violation of subdivision 2 or 3 that the licensee or individual making the sale relied in good faith upon proof of age as described in section 340A.503, subdivision 6.

Subd. 7. **Judicial review.** Any person aggrieved by a decision under subdivision 2 or 3 may have the decision reviewed in the district court in the same manner and procedure as provided in section 462.361.

Subd. 8. **Notice to commissioner.** The licensing authority under this section shall, within 30 days of the issuance of a license, inform the commissioner of revenue of the licensee's name, address, trade name, and the effective and expiration dates of the license. The commissioner of revenue must also be informed of a license renewal, transfer, cancellation, suspension, or revocation during the license period.

History: 1941 c 242 s 3; 1941 c 405 s 3; 1951 c 382 s 1; Ex1959 c 73 s 2; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1982 c 572 s 2; 1997 c 227 s 4; 1Sp2001 c 5 art 7 s 63