

Preventing the Underage Sale of Alcohol Staff Training Notes for Managers and Supervisors

These notes have been prepared for managers and supervisors of staff who are involved in the sale of alcohol and other age restricted products.

We recommend that all staff are made fully aware of the law and of the consequences of making under age sales. This will ensure that they are confident in refusing sales when customers are unable to produce a suitable form of identification.

The penalties for selling alcohol to under age customers include a maximum fine of £5000, a possible prison sentence and a criminal record. However a suitable Premises Age Verification Policy that is properly administered and maintained will help you to avoid breaking the law.

All of these notes and tests can be downloaded and printed individually from our website www.torbay.gov.uk/trading-standards.

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1. The Law

The following table lists all of the age-restricted products your staff should be aware of.

Age restricted products	Age restriction
Alcohol	18
Cigarettes and tobacco products including from vending machines	18
Fireworks	18
Knives, blades and axes (not including folding knives with blades under 3 inches long)	18
Solvents and lighter refills	18
Lottery tickets and scratch cards	16
Petrol	16
Spray paints	16
Video/DVD/Games	As shown on certificate e.g. 12, 15, 18

2. Training - using the film, notes and tests

No Proof of Age – No Sale

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A typical training session should involve staff reading the Guidance Notes, watching the film and completing a written test, followed by an evaluation to assess the impact of the training. If a member of staff achieves a poor result we suggest offering further guidance and re-sitting the test.

Keep a written record of the training and include the staff member's name, their signature, and the date.

The film is 16 minutes long and shows some situations in which a customer is asked to prove their age and where sales should be refused. It also gives some idea of the fines facing anyone who sells alcohol to a person who is underage.

The notes contain all of the key facts and well as some tips on refusing sales. You may wish to allow staff to study them in their own time with a test the following day

The tests are all multiple choice and the answers are on the website and in the film.

It is recommended that the training and tests are repeated periodically to ensure that staff competence is maintained.

3. Running a training session

1. Introduction

Explain to the trainees that this session is to help them understand the age restrictions that apply to different products.

Tell them that by the end they should understand the following:

- What the law says about under age sales
- The penalties for making an under age sale
- How to refuse an under age sale
- That they are **personally responsible** for preventing under age sales and could be held personally liable
- That employers whose staff make under age sales may lose their licence

2. **Film 'no proof of age – no sale'** (16 minutes). Have a group discussion after the film and ask whether they have any questions

3. **Staff notes.** Hand out copies and give staff time to read them through. Alternatively have them study the notes prior to the training session.

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4. Practical exercise

Practice saying 'no' - this is to help staff feel more confident about their right to refuse a sale. If staff feel less nervous about saying 'no' they are more likely to challenge a customer and prevent illegal sales.

Ask your staff to think about exactly what they would say if they had to respond in real life to the following excuses.

- "I've left my ID at home"
- "I lost my card and I'm waiting for a new one"
- "Of course I'm over 18 – who are you kidding?"
- "My dad asked me to get his beer for him"

5. Tests

At the end of the session discuss the test answers to check their understanding and knowledge and end the training session with the following reminders:

- That the penalties for selling age restricted products to under age people are very serious and could affect them personally
- Always follow the 'Challenge 21?' or 'Challenge 25?' rule and ask for proof of age from anyone who does not look 21/25 or over.
- A buyer's age is not a matter of opinion. Staff are within their rights to ask for proof and to refuse a sale to anyone who does not carry correct proof of age. In fact staff have the right to refuse a sale if they have any doubts at all about the buyer.

No Proof of Age – No Sale