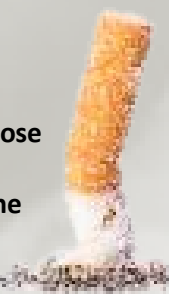


One Loosie Can Cost You \$500!

A single cigarette sold separate from the original package, commonly referred to as a “loosie” is a growing threat for public health and business owners. Despite that fact, retailers have been illegally selling loose cigarettes for years and old habits are difficult to change. In April of 2009, Ryan Stanton interviewed store owners and customers in Saginaw for an article on loose cigarettes that appeared in the Bay City Times. At that time, two out of five retailers said they sold loosies. One interviewee said he believed “retailers did not think they were breaking the law if they had the surgeon general’s warning on the jug”. Recently, the state legislature proposed an increased penalty for both the seller and the purchaser of single cigarettes. This has not yet been approved.

Why are single sales so popular?

- The cigarette tax increase in Michigan and economic downturn made cigarettes unaffordable to many. With the price per pack of cigarettes close to \$8, retailers suggest loosies are an affordable option.
- Perceived as a greater profit for retailers: at a minimum of two for \$1, the equivalent of a pack costs \$10.
- Some current smokers say it helps them quit if they don’t buy an entire pack.



What is wrong with making a buck selling loosies?

- Illegal and punishable by both Michigan’s Youth Tobacco Act (YTA) and federal law.
- Entices non-smokers to experiment or current smokers to continue smoking cigarettes.
- The longer an individual continues to smoke, the greater the risk for addiction, lung disease and cancers.

A 50 cents loosie sale puts you at risk for a fine of up to \$500.



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER . . . AVOID PENALTIES

Know the law and make sure your employees comply - No tobacco sales to minors and no single cigarette sales

- ✓ Go to the free online certification exam to empower you and your employees at: <http://improvingmipractices.org/>
- ✓ Report violators by using the State Tobacco Complaint Violator Form at: www.michigan.gov/tobaccocomplaint or by e-mail to Carolyn Foxall, Synar Program Coordinator at foxallc@michigan.gov.
- ✓ Federal violations may be reported at: www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/ptvr/index.cfm.
- ✓ Retailers are also violating the state sales tax law by not recording all tobacco sales. This could lead to further penalties.

The message is clear . . . Do Your Part - Obey the law and don’t sell tobacco to minors!

More Resources:

Michigan Legislature. (2015, January 27). *Youth Tobacco Act - Act of 1915*. Retrieved January 27, 2015, from Michigan Legislature: <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-Act-31-of-1915>

Oosting, J. (2014, September 9). *'Loosie' lockdown? Michigan lawmaker seeks new penalties for selling, buying single cigarettes*. Retrieved January 27, 2015, from M Live.com: http://www.mlive.com/lansing-news/index.ssf/2014/09/loosie_lockdown_michigan_lawma.html

Stanton, R. (2009, April 16). *Some Bay City stores selling single cigarettes to help customers, but it's still illegal, police say*. Retrieved January 27, 2015, from M Live.Com: http://www.mlive.com/news/bay-city/index.ssf/2009/04/some_bay_city_stores_selling_s.html