

What is Tobacco Retail Licensing?

In August 2010, 27% of local tobacco retailers surveyed countywide sold tobacco to minors. This local rate is 3 times higher than the current state rate of 7.7%.

In August 2010, Watsonville became the first jurisdiction in Santa Cruz County to pass a tobacco retailer licensing ordinance (TRL). The Board of Supervisors followed in March, 2011. Watsonville and the County of Santa Cruz have joined approximately 80 other California cities and counties that have passed a TRL ordinance in order to address illegal sales of tobacco products to minors. A TRL ordinance requires retailers to obtain a license to sell tobacco products and includes an annual licensing fee to fund enforcement programs.

Those communities who have enacted strong tobacco retail licensing policies have had great success in reducing tobacco sales to minors. For instance, in Berkeley, the sales rate dropped from 38% to 4% after passing a licensing ordinance.

How to obtain a license?

Unincorporated Areas

If you are a tobacco retailer in the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz, please call the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Department at 454-2022 to obtain a TRL application. For more information about TRL in the unincorporated areas, please review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

City of Watsonville

If you are a retailer in the City of Watsonville, please call the Watsonville Police Department at 768-3370 or visit the Police Department at 215 Union Street to obtain an application.