

Staff training notes for managers and supervisors

These notes have been prepared for trainers, managers and supervisors to help sales staff who are involved in businesses that sell or supply age restricted products. They are straightforward and easy to use.

We recommend that sales and door staff are made fully aware of the law and the consequences of making under age sales, so that they are confident about requesting proof of age from a young person and refusing a sale when it cannot be produced.

Crime, anti-social behaviour and poor health are important problems in all communities. Research shows that the sale of age restricted products to under age customers is making these problems worse.

Selling such products to under age consumers breaks the law and risks severe penalties including large fines, prison sentences and a criminal record.

All the notes and tests can be downloaded and printed individually. You need to print a copy of the staff notes and test for each trainee. Refer to test section of CD Rom.

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1 The law

It is illegal to sell or supply certain products to people under a specific age. By selling such goods, you may be committing a criminal offence which may result in having to pay fines.

Trading standards and the police use volunteers, following a code of practice, to check that businesses are making sure that age restricted products are not being sold to under age customers.

These products are

Age restricted product	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

Most businesses and employees are responsible and want to do their best to protect their customers, their business and their reputation. It is not acceptable to say – ‘I didn’t know the purchaser was under age’. Everyone in the business needs to know which laws apply to age restricted products.

2 Using the film, notes and tests

The aim of the resources on this CD Rom is to help businesses and employees recognise age restricted products and prevent their sale to under age customers.

We suggest that employees read the staff notes in their own time. The training sessions involve viewing the film and a test, so that the trainer can evaluate the impact of the training. The CD Rom includes a general and product specific tests, which you should use to supplement training and ensure staff competence. If a member of staff achieves a poor result in the tests, we suggest offering further guidance and another viewing of the film and, when ready, they should do the tests again.

Keep a record of all staff training which details

- **Date of initial test**
- **Date of training received**
- **Date of subsequent test**
- **Trainer’s signature, name and date**
- **Staff members signature, name and date**
- **Date of next test/refresher**
- **Area Manager’s signature and date**

You will find a sample in the test section on the CD Rom. We recommend that Managers print and complete one for each staff member. This will constitute proof that they have been trained.

3 Guide to using the training plan

Please read this before running a training session.

To get the best out of any training session you should put aside about 45 minutes to read these notes, watch the film and read all the other materials on the CD Rom.

You will need to print the staff notes, photocards poster and relevant tests so that each trainee has their own copies.

You should allow about 40 minutes to run the session including viewing the film.

The tests

All tests are multiple choice. We suggest that you run off copies of the general test and other relevant tests for each trainee. The answers are on the CD Rom and in the film. Trainees should be aware they will be required to complete the test soon after the training. If the results show they do not seem to understand the training, you will need to arrange for them to do it again.

It is recommended that the training and tests are repeated periodically to ensure competence is maintained or where lack of competence becomes apparent e.g. not following the ‘Challenge 21?’ policy or neglecting to complete the refusals book.

Staff should complete the general test and the relevant product specific tests. Each test should be signed and dated by the trainer and the staff member and kept by your business as a training record. It should also include any notes on further action/training that may be required and any proposed date of retest.

The film

This is 15 minutes long. It shows situations in which a customer is asked to prove their age and where sales must be refused. It also gives some idea of the fines that face anyone who sells an age restricted product to a person who is too young.

Some practice saying 'no'

This is to help staff be confident about their right to refuse a sale and their ability to do it properly. If staff feel less nervous about saying 'no' they are more likely to challenge a customer when necessary, saving themselves and their employer from serious consequences.

In the training session (section 4) there are some suggested sentences/phrases which you can use to help trainees to think about how to talk to a customer when refusing a sale. The film and the notes also provide help on what to say and do.

4 Suggested training session

Spend a couple of minutes explaining what the session is about. The longest part is the 15 minute film. It contains very important messages about the laws that cover age restricted sales and the penalties for breaking them.

What to include in the training session

1. Explain the session, some key facts and figures
2. Show the film or request that staff view it shortly before the session
3. Have a brief discussion about the film
4. Refer to the staff notes
5. Practical exercise on how to say "no"
6. Use the test(s) and go through the answers
7. Sum up and check need for extra information and discuss points of interest

Timing

The session is divided into seven parts and shows rough timings. These will help you keep within the total time suggested.

Running the training session

1. Introduction

(2 minutes)

Explain to the trainees that this session is to help them understand what can legally be sold to people of different ages.

Tell them that by the end they should understand these things:

- 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.

Explain that they need to know this information because there are severe penalties for selling age restricted products to under age customers

- staff are personally responsible for the sale - they can be fined, given a criminal record, be imprisoned and/or lose their jobs
- employers whose staff make under age sales may suffer all of the above and they may lose their licence

- it will help them to refuse a sale confidently and to understand what records they must keep when they do.

Tell them why this is important:

- age restricted products are often dangerous – selling them to under age customers is a serious and growing problem.
- run through the ‘Guidelines to follow’, section 5 in the staff notes.
- explain that these are serious problems that affect us all - staff need to know that they have a legal responsibility to help make things better.

2. Film ‘no proof of age – no sale’

(16 minutes)

Before showing the film explain that it will

- last 15 minutes
- give information about the law on under age sales and the penalties for breaking them
- include examples of reasons they can give for refusing a sale, and how to do this effectively without causing offence.

3. Ask trainees to comment on the film

(2 minutes)

4. Staff notes about the sale and supply of age restricted products

(3 minutes)

Hand out copies and introduce the contents. Draw attention to

- the chart of ages at which customers can buy products legally
- the advice on how to check proof of age (section 4)
- the advice on how to refuse a sale – including the tips on how to keep calm and how to control the situation (section 6).

Explain to trainees that they will need to look at these key sections in their own time.

5. Practical exercise

(5 minutes)

Explain that this is a brief exercise to help them think about how they should act and what they should say if they need to refuse a sale.

Using the statements below one at a time, ask trainees to think about exactly what they would say if they had to respond in real life.

- “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 cigarettes for him.”

If there are only a few trainees ask them to note down how they would reply to two or three of the statements. If you have a larger group ask them to work in pairs (or threes), taking it in turns to make one of the statements while another trainee replies as the seller.

Finish this part with a group discussion using a few of the trainees' responses. Don't forget to remind them about the guidelines in the notes.

6. Tests

(About 10 minutes including the general test and relevant product specific tests)

At the end, discuss the test answers briefly.

7. Sum up and check their understanding and knowledge

(2 minutes)

End the training session by telling the trainees the key messages one more time. Remember to tell them the following

- The penalties for selling age restricted products to under age people are very serious and could affect the staff member personally.
- Follow a 'Challenge 21?' rule and ask for proof of age from anyone who does not look 21 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.
- The staff notes are provided to help remind trainees of their legal responsibilities and of their rights. Trainees should read the notes carefully more than once – it will remind them of the facts and prepare them to do the test again in the future.

You should tell staff the date of the next test so that they can prepare.

5 Supporting staff in refusing sales

These notes reinforce those in the notes for staff.

- You are entitled to refuse to sell anything to anyone, so if your customer appears to be under age and they are unable to produce valid proof of age, YOU MUST REFUSE to sell any age restricted products.
- Be polite, but firm. Say you are unable to serve them without evidence that they are the correct age for the purchase. Say you must ask for proof of age from anyone who might be under 21. If they are unable to produce any, then you must refuse the sale, because you are required by law to do so without it.
- Suggest that you would be willing to serve them the goods in question if they returned to the store with valid proof of age.
- Point to relevant signage in the store.
- Avoid confrontation. If you have an under age customer who, when challenged, takes offence at being asked to provide proof of age, say that if they can produce it, you will be able to serve them. If they do not and become aggressive or abusive, stay calm and polite.
- Be confident about your knowledge of the law. Have information to hand that shows why you are questioning their age.
- Be aware of your body language. Keep your voice even and calm, be firm, and if possible keep your hands open and maintain eye contact.
- If you are subjected to verbal abuse do not respond.
- Remind them that their actions are being captured by the CCTV camera.

- Don't try to justify not selling on any grounds other than the lack of evidence of age.
- Try to make sure they are clear that they have been refused because their appearance suggests they may be under age, and therefore need valid proof of age.

If the situation gets worse

- Don't interrupt or allow yourself to be drawn into any arguments about their age
- Don't use confrontational body language, step away and keep a safe distance
- Call your manager or supervisor for help
- Keep your voice calm and move slowly
- Tell the customer that you are just complying with the law and that the rules are the same for everyone
- Tell them that their behaviour is unacceptable and ask them to leave the premises in a clear and calm voice
- Do not, under any circumstance, no matter what the provocation, return their aggression
- If all else fails, advise them that you will have no option but to call the police, and that they have already been filmed on CCTV
- If this does not work call the police.

After the situation has been dealt with

- Make an entry into the refusals register
- If possible, take some time to cool off, and seek the advice of your manager or supervisor or another colleague
- If the situation warrants it, notify the police if you have not already done so.