



July 24, 2019

Re: Tobacco Products and Paraphernalia Sales

Dear Operator,

Last year, Summit County Public Health began an initiative to raise the legal age to buy tobacco, tobacco products, and paraphernalia to 21 in Summit County. Commonly referred to as T21, this initiative is occurring in states and cities across the country as an evidence based policy change to curb the youth adoption rate for tobacco use. The research reports this is an effective method because 95% of adult smokers begin smoking before they turn 21. In Summit County almost 1 out of 2 high school students have tried an e-cigarette by their senior year. The Summit County Board of Health passed an environmental health code to establish the program in July of 2018 (*EHC 1102 Tobacco Products and Paraphernalia Sales*) and subsequently many cities, villages and townships have supported the legislation by passing resolutions of their own to allow enforcement.

Since that time, as a part of the State of Ohio Budget Bill, the age to legally purchase tobacco in Ohio will soon increase to 21 statewide. This statewide initiative is aimed to reduce youth tobacco use. In the next 90 days, the Ohio Department of Health will be developing rules and program resources to implement this initiative. State law does not supersede our local Tobacco 21 code and it is still in effect with no changes. Certificates of Compliance with the code are still required in your political subdivision and the age to buy tobacco in Summit County remains at 21. Our inspectors will continue performing inspections of your establishment and providing education and cessation resources. Enforcement of the regulation is still in effect with controlled tobacco purchases along with the ability to levy fines for non-compliance.

As more information on the new state law becomes available, we will keep you informed of the implications on your business. Updates and resources will also be available at our website www.scph.org/t21. Should you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to reach out to myself at 330.812.3868 (tburford@scph.org) or Cory Kendrick, Policy Manager at 330.926.5685 (ckendrick@scph.org).

Sincerely,

Tonia W. Burford, M.S., R.S.
Director of Environmental Health