

WASHINGTON 21

RAISE THE TOBACCO AGE



Why raise the tobacco sale age in Washington State?

A tobacco 21 sale age complements other local strategies to reduce youth tobacco use, including banning flavored tobacco products, limiting tobacco permits, eliminating sales of tobacco products in pharmacies, and placing packaging and pricing requirements on cigars.

Raising the tobacco sale age to 21 will have a substantial positive impact on public health and save hundreds of thousands of lives, according to a 2015 report by the Institute of Medicine.

“Raising the legal minimum age for cigarette purchaser to 21 could gut our key young adult market (17-20) ...”

– Philip Morris report, January 21, 1986¹

Nicotine is strongly addictive, and adolescents and young adults are more susceptible to its effects because their brains are still developing. Delaying the age when young people first experiment with or begin using tobacco can reduce the risk that they will become addicted smokers.

95%

of adult smokers
begin smoking before
they turn 21²

80%

of adult smokers
become daily smokers
before they turn 18³

33%

of kids under 18 who become
regular smokers will die as a
result of smoking⁴

Learn more and take action at www.washington21.org

¹ Philip Morris, “Discussion Draft Sociopolitical Strategy,” January 21, 1986, Bates Number 2043440040/0049, <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/aba84e00>.

² USDHHS, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2014. ICPSR36361-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2016-03-22. <http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36361.v1>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ CDC, “Projected Smoking-Related Deaths Among Youth-United States,” MMWR 45(44):971-974, November 8, 1996, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm4544.pdf>.