



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Prevent. Protect. Prepare.

Alcohol Law Enforcement

Pat McCrory, Governor
Kieran J. Shanahan, Secretary

Gregory K. Baker, Director

Dear Retailer:

I am pleased to present you with a Red Flag Merchant Packet and display materials that should be posted at your retail outlet. As you know, it is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone less than 18 years old. Since 1997, NC Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) has been working diligently to enforce the laws governing tobacco sales to minors in the state. We take this role very seriously as it is our goal to reduce the number of violations regarding the sale of tobacco to minors.

The state law requires retailers to train their employees regarding the requirements of the law (N.C.G.S. 14-313). Retailers are required to ensure that their employees:

- Check I.D. if the customer appears to be younger than 26.
- Match the photo I.D. with the appearance of the customer. Do not assume that a young person is 18 if they hand you an I.D.
- Refuse the sale if the ID has a **red** border (means the license holder is less than 18 years old).
- Inform the customer of the reason you refused the sale (i.e. "It is illegal for me to sell tobacco products to a minor").

For years, Alcohol Law Enforcement and the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services have partnered through the "**Red Flag Tobacco Enforcement Campaign**". This program is designed to educate the retail community on North Carolina's color-coded driver's license format in order to promote compliance with the state law.

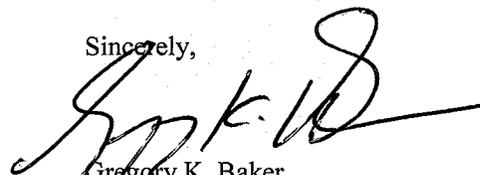
North Carolina has now made it even easier to identify underage customers with its "vertical" license design for license holders that are under 21 years of age. The "vertical" license features text beside the photo which gives the dates the patron will turn 18 and 21 years of age.

Be sure to share the information contained in this packet with all of your employees. ALE can assist you by providing free training on North Carolina law regarding sales of tobacco products, alcohol or any other topics you have questions about for you and your employees. Please contact your local ALE district office if you would like to arrange training.

If you have questions or need Red Flag materials (brochures, posters, cash register stickers, or buttons) contact Mrs. Carol Morris, the Tobacco Coordinator at ALE headquarters by phone at (919) 733-4060 or by email to Carol.Morris@ncdps.gov. We encourage you to use these materials in training your employees.

ALE is available to work with you and your employees to make sure that tobacco products are not made available to our youth. We advise retail merchants to educate themselves on the State Laws; to establish policies and procedures; and to offer routine employee training in order to comply with the law. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Gregory K. Baker
Director

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An Equal Opportunity employer

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