

YOUTH TOBACCO USE

Tobacco is generally the first drug used by young people who enter a sequence of drug use that can include tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and harder drugs such as cocaine and heroin.

According to the 1994 Surgeon General's report, 12-17 year olds who reported having smoked in the past 30 days were:

- three times more likely to use alcohol,
- eight times more likely to smoke marijuana, and
- 22 times more likely to use cocaine,

within those past 30 days than those 12-17 year olds who had not smoked during that time.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) states, "The experience of smoking can teach youngsters to use a psychoactive drug to influence mood and alertness, as nicotine does, and then reinforce that behavior.

Smoking cigarettes prepares young people for the relevant mode of ingestion for one of the next drugs in the sequence - namely marijuana."

NIDA points out that drawing a foreign substance into the lungs is not a normal behavior for humans or other animals: "it is a behavior which has to be learned and rewarded enough to overcome the aversive experiences which usually result."

Youth smoking can be a direct correlation to many of our headline community issues. Some argue that allowing youth access to tobacco is simply increasing the incidence of community problems and populating our streets with potential criminals.

Illegal drug use is rare among those who have never smoked and cigarette smoking is likely to precede the use of alcohol and illicit drugs.

(National Survey Results on Drug Use from the Monitoring the Future Study, 1975. © The University of Michigan)

TEXAS STEP

Located at Texas State University-San Marcos, as a part of the Department of Criminal Justice in the College of Applied Arts, Texas Statewide Tobacco Education & Prevention (Texas STEP) provides public awareness information on the tobacco laws, best practices and protocols to enforce the laws, and ways to increase tobacco awareness at the local level.

Texas STEP was founded in 1993 to provide training and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies after the passage of the Federal SYNAR Amendment. In 1997, Texas put into effect one of the strongest and most comprehensive tobacco laws in the country with the passage of Senate Bill 55, 75th Legislature. Texas STEP plays an integral role in the implementation of Senate Bill 55.

Aimed at reducing youth access to tobacco products by eliminating the illegal sale of tobacco to children, this law provides for comprehensive retailer education & inspections of retailers by law enforcement to ensure compliance.

Texas STEP provides training and technical assistance throughout the state of Texas. Participating law enforcement agencies receive updates on the law, are provided strategies and curricula on compliance education, are informed on the health consequences of youth tobacco use, are made aware of their legal reporting responsibilities, and can receive in-service training on the enforcement protocols.

KEY PROVISIONS OF SB# 55

- ✪ Prohibits minors from buying or using tobacco products.
- ✪ Prohibits minors from possessing tobacco products except in the presence of the minor's parent, guardian, or adult spouse.
- ✪ Penalizes minors for violating the law by requiring them to attend an eight-hour tobacco awareness program, perform tobacco-related public service, and/or pay a fine of up to \$250. Also allows a judge to suspend or delay the issuance of a minor's driver's license for up to six months and/or require the parent/guardian of a minor to attend tobacco awareness classes along with the minor.

- ✪ Prohibits sale of "kiddie packs," containing fewer than 20 cigarettes.
- ✪ Prohibits outdoor advertising of tobacco products within 1,000 feet of a church or school.
- ✪ Restricts cigarette vending machines and other self-service sales except in places not open to those under 18 or in places used as cigar humidors.

By providing for block grants to local law enforcement agencies, the Legislature empowered communities to act locally to reduce youth access to tobacco!

YOUTH SMOKING & RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

1992 National Health Interview Survey of Youth Risk Behavior
National Center for Health Statistics

Other Problem Behaviors	Never Smoked	Current Youth Smoker
Alcohol use in past month	23.0%	74.4%
Five or more drinks in a row (binge)	9.5%	50.3%
Marijuana use in past month	1.5%	26.5%
Smokeless tobacco use in past month (boys)	4.1%	28.1%
Carried a weapon	9.5%	25.6%
Physical fight in past year	29.0%	54.7%

*N=10,645 persons, age 12-21 years of age

Texas STEP can be reached by calling 1-888-STEP-123 or on the Internet at WWW.TEXAS-STEP.ORG

Texas STEP's Model of Enforcement

Reducing youth access is the ultimate goal of applying the elements of Texas STEP's Model of Enforcement.

Compliance with our state's tobacco control laws sends a message to the public that community leaders believe these policies are important.

In Texas, this effort involves a multi-pronged approach: 1) providing compliance education to retailers and school-aged youth; 2) enforcing laws on retail sales of tobacco products to children and; 3) citing minors who are in possession of tobacco.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, numerous studies have shown that a combination of educating retailers and active, graduated enforcement of tobacco access laws is most effective in reducing illegal sales to minors.

The six components of Texas STEP's Model of Enforcement are:

- ★ Compliance Education of Tobacco Retailers
- ★ Compliance Inspections
- ★ Controlled Buys/Stings
- ★ Follow up on Violators and Non-Violators
- ★ Compliance Education of School-Aged Youth
- ★ Enforcement of Minor in Possession (MIP) of Tobacco Laws



Don't ya be CHOKIN'
Me with your SMOKIN'



Texas Statewide
Tobacco Education
& Prevention

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Toll-Free:
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Givin' Tobacco the BOOT!