

Main Identity

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Subject: News from Texas STEP - Tobacco Enforcement



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E-News Update

June 15, 2009

Greetings!

I hope this finds you well. As we move into the Summer season we historically see an increase in tobacco enforcement activities using minors in "sting" operations around the state due to the increased availability of youth who are out of school. Data also suggest that the Summer is the most prevalent season for illegal purchasing of tobacco by youth, and illegal sales of tobacco to youth. In many communities, minor in possession of tobacco offenses increase as well.

Please keep in mind as you go about your enforcement activities that the youth who are assisting in tobacco enforcement are an invaluable asset to all our efforts. Take a minute and thank them for helping you out, and please thank them from all of us at Texas STEP as well.

We wish you well, and if you need any assistance from us, please call toll-free at 1-888-STEP-123.

Thanks!

Notice for Law Enforcement Agencies Conducting Tobacco Compliance Sting Operations:

Recently there have been numerous news reports regarding the recent arrest by Texas Rangers of a Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) Agent who was charged with Sexual Misconduct and Official Oppression resulting from his alleged illegal activities occurring during a TABC sanctioned alcohol sting. The Comptroller's Office and Texas STEP want to reiterate the sting operation protocols taught in the grant training program and the proper procedure when performing compliance inspections of tobacco retailers using minors decoys.

It is always important to have two officers accompany a minor on a sting operation. Under rare circumstances, where staffing makes this impossible, there should be two minors accompanying an officer during compliance inspections of tobacco retailers. This protocol should be used throughout any operation using minors, including through the end of operations with the safe delivery of the minor back to the custody of the parents or guardians.

It is important that each agency review its tobacco sting protocols to ensure these

procedures are being followed. The safety of the minors assisting us in these operations cannot be emphasized enough.

If you have questions or concerns related to your ability to follow this protocol, you should contact Texas STEP at 1-888-783-7123.

2009 Texas Teen Tobacco Summit & Comprehensive Tobacco Prevention Conference

**The Woodlands, Texas
July 26 - 29th, 2009**

In a previous mailing, Texas STEP sent an announcement about the 2009 Texas Teen Tobacco Summit & Comprehensive Tobacco Prevention Conference that will be put on by the Center for Safe Communities and Schools.

Attendance is not required as part of the grant you receive, but we are encouraging grantees with funds available to send representatives to the conference.

This conference will also include several keynote speakers and prevention sessions related to minor use of tobacco products.

The Comptroller's office and Texas STEP will be hosting a law enforcement networking meeting on Monday evening of the conference. There will be an award ceremony to recognize outstanding grantees from around the state. We hope that this, as well as the education and enforcement sessions, will allow networking with our offices, as well as with other law enforcement agencies.

Use of Grant Funding:

The Comptroller's office allows grant funds to be utilized in sending up to two grantee personnel to this conference. This is a great opportunity to get staff new to the grant program educated on tobacco education and enforcement.

For additional questions regarding the use of grant funds, please contact Shaula Scardami at 888-783-7123.

Credit Hours:

By attending this conference, you may be eligible to receive up to 16 TCLEOSE, DARE In-service, LCDC, and/or CPS continuing education hours.

****If you are a recipient of an FY 2010 Comptroller tobacco enforcement grant, attending the conference may exempt you from attending the fall grant training workshop.**

Adult Registration:

Registration after June 12th **\$350.00**

For more information about the conference, please call Jennifer Steele at 877-304-2727, or visit the [Center for Safe Communities and Schools website](#).

Texas STEP's Quick Links...

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- [Texas Tobacco Laws](#)
- [Report Forms](#)
- [STEP6](#)
- [STEP8](#)
- [Information for Texas Tobacco Retailers](#)
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Immediate Contact Numbers:

Toll-Free: 1-888-STEP-123 or Fax: 1-512-246-8066

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