

FAQs about Tobacco Retail Licensing in Tuolumne County

Q: What products are considered tobacco or nicotine products? Which products are affected by this ordinance?

A: Nicotine is an addictive chemical found in the tobacco plant, which can also be synthetically derived. Whether synthetic or naturally occurring, nicotine-containing products are regulated as tobacco products under both [state](#) and [federal](#) law. Common tobacco or nicotine products include cigarettes, vaping devices, chew tobacco, oral nicotine pouches, and more. FDA-approved smoking cessation aids that contain nicotine, such as nicotine gum or nicotine patches, are NOT included in the definition of commercial tobacco or nicotine products.

Q: What makes a tobacco or nicotine product flavored?

A: A tobacco or nicotine product is considered flavored if it contains a taste or smell, other than the taste or smell of tobacco, that is distinguishable by an ordinary consumer. In other words, if the product tastes or smells like anything other than plain tobacco, it may be considered flavored.

Q: When do I need to get a Tobacco Retail License?

A: All businesses wishing to sell tobacco and nicotine products in Tuolumne County unincorporated areas must apply for a Tobacco Retail License immediately. Facilities who do not apply by April 3, 2025 will be subject to enforcement actions.

Q: How can my business apply for a Tuolumne County Tobacco Retail License?

A: You should apply online through the county's OpenGov portal:
<https://tuolumnecountyca.portal.opengov.com/categories/1076/record-types/6688>

Q: What businesses in the county does this new ordinance apply to? What is an "unincorporated area" in Tuolumne County?

A: This ordinance applies to businesses that are located in Tuolumne County, but not within another municipal or tribal jurisdiction. This includes all businesses except those located in the City of Sonora or on sovereign tribal lands.

Q: Does this new ordinance change which kinds of tobacco or nicotine products my business can sell?

A: The new ordinance requires that businesses follow the laws that already existed at the state level relating to tobacco sales, including not selling tobacco or nicotine products to people under 21 years of

age and not selling flavored tobacco or nicotine products among other rules. If your business was already in compliance with California state laws, no changes to your products should be necessary.

Q: Does this new ordinance take the place of the tobacco license required by the [California Department of Tax and Fee Administration](#) (CDTFA)?

A: No. The Tuolumne County Tobacco Retail License is in addition to the license required by CDTFA. The two processes are entirely separate, and business must comply with both to sell tobacco or nicotine products in Tuolumne County unincorporated areas.

Q: Where can I find more information about the California laws that regulate tobacco and nicotine sales?

A: The California Department of Public Health maintains an educational webpage for tobacco retailers in the state, including information about flavored tobacco, tobacco 21 age restrictions, and other relevant laws. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/CTCB/Pages/TobaccoRetailersResources.aspx>

Q: Where can I find more information about tobacco or nicotine products generally, or find support for someone who wants to quit nicotine?

A: The Tuolumne County Tobacco Prevention Program's webpage includes resources and links to more information for many topics related to tobacco and nicotine products.
<https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/270/Tobacco-Prevention-Education>

Q: Who can I contact if I have more questions about the Tobacco Retail License?

A: For information about local and state laws related to tobacco retail, contact Katie Johnson, Tuolumne County Public Health Tobacco Prevention Program Supervisor: (209) 533-6862.
For information about the Tuolumne County Tobacco Retail License application and enforcement process, contact Nadine Martelli, Principal Environmental Health Specialist: (209) 533-5692.