



Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet

Andy Beshear, Governor

Ray A. Perry, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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All Tobacco, Nicotine and Vapor Product Retailers Must Be Licensed by Jan. 1, 2026

Frankfort, Ky. (Nov. 14, 2025) – Today, the Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet is reminding all businesses engaged in retail sale of tobacco, nicotine and vapor products in the commonwealth that they must be licensed by the Kentucky Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) by Jan. 1, 2026.

“We heard from parents, teachers, community members and, importantly, young advocates that harmful nicotine and vapor products have been easily accessible to minors, leading to a rise in teen vaping,” said Sec. Ray Perry. “This initiative gives Team Kentucky the enforcement power needed to better protect our youth from harmful products.”

Gov. Beshear signed Senate Bill 100 into law on March 24, 2025. The law requires all tobacco, nicotine and vapor retailers to obtain an annual state license through ABC and strengthens enforcement including:

- Routine and unannounced compliance checks to ensure retailers are not selling to minors or selling illegal product;
- Greater fines and penalties for violating the law, including potential loss of licensure and criminal penalties for selling without a license; and
- Instituting a new enforcement team to investigate consumer complaints.

A portion of collected fines will be directed to youth vaping prevention efforts.

Any business participating in the retail sale of tobacco, nicotine and vapor products as of Jan. 1, 2026, is urged to submit their application as soon as possible. ABC cannot guarantee that licenses will be issued by that date without ample processing time.

Applications are available exclusively through [ABC's Online Licensing Portal](#), which was launched last week. For more information or assistance with your application, contact the ABC at abc.info@ky.gov.

Educating Teens on the Dangers of Nicotine Products

In the 2023 Kentucky Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 8.7% of Kentucky students self-reported that they are vaping daily and almost 19.7% reported having vaped in the last 30 days. The Beshear administration oversees several programs through the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) to educate teens on the dangers of vaping and nicotine products.

In 2025, Kentucky achieved '100% tobacco-free schools' status, meaning every public school in the commonwealth has a policy prohibiting smoking, vaping, and using other tobacco-products on all school properties, by all students, staff and visitors, at all times. When enforced, these policies are shown to reduce the percent of youth who ever start smoking by up to 30%.

KDPH provides tailored technical assistance and mini-grants to schools, health departments and community organizations that want additional support enforcing tobacco-free policies, providing prevention education, or helping youth and adults get treatment for nicotine addiction. The department also administers the state's tobacco quitline: My Life, My Quit for people 17 and younger, and Quit Now Kentucky for adults. The quitline is completely confidential and offers free guidance from trained quit coaches as well as a supportive online community. For people 17 and younger, all coaching can be done through text messages. The program also [offers free medications that can help you quit smoking](#), such as nicotine patches or gum.

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