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MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER MINTZ REVEAL DIRTY DEALERS WHO SELL TOBACCO TO UNDERAGE KIDS

Nearly 200 Tobacco Retail Licenses Have Been Revoked Over the Past Two Years

More than 15,000 Undercover Inspections Conducted This Year; 84% of All Businesses Inspected Citywide Don't Sell Cigarettes to Kids

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Department of Consumer Affairs ([DCA](#)) Commissioner Jonathan Mintz today released a list of 195 "Dirty Dealers" that have had their tobacco retail licenses revoked over the past two years for selling on two or more occasions to teens. This year, more than 15,000 undercover inspections have been performed by DCA - targeting retailers who sell cigarettes to underage buyers and serving them with significant City and State fines and ultimately, for repeat offenders, license revocation. The Mayor and Commissioner Mintz were joined by [Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#) Commissioner Dr. Thomas Frieden, staff from DCA's undercover tobacco prevention program, members of Reality Check, a statewide initiative focused on youth-to-youth advocacy against the tobacco industry, and representatives from anti-tobacco organizations.

"Our Administration is using every tool available to ensure that businesses don't sell cigarettes to kids - and it's working," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Most smokers start at an early age, making children the most vulnerable to getting hooked on cigarettes. Through the City's aggressive efforts, 84% of businesses inspected did the right thing. But, for those that did not, the message is clear: selling cigarettes to kids will cost you big fines and possibly your license."

"DCA conducted more than 15,000 inspections this year, pounding the pavement every day in each borough, because selling cigarettes to kids is simply unacceptable," said Commissioner Mintz. "Compliance is high, but when it comes to protecting our kids, it's not high enough. If you see a retailer selling cigarettes to kids, help us stop them by calling 311."

"Selling tobacco to kids is illegal," said DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Thomas R. Frieden. "But our City's youth have sent a powerful message because they are smoking less than ever. Nearly 9 out of 10 of our public high school students are non-smokers. Nationally, the rate is more than double that figure. Because most people who don't start smoking by age 18 never start, more New York City kids are likely to lead tobacco-free lives."

In addition to licensing more than 11,000 tobacco retailers in New York City, DCA runs the Youth Tobacco Enforcement and Prevention Program where teens, ages 15-17, work with agency inspectors to go undercover to curb illegal sales to minors. Accompanied by a DCA inspector, teens conduct routine inspections at stores year-round in all five boroughs.

DCA cites retailers who do not obtain proper proof of identification before making a sale. City fines are \$1,000 for the first offense and \$2,000 for the second, plus possible license revocation. Licenses are revoked for a minimum of one year. State fines are a maximum of \$1,000 for the first offense and \$1,500 for each thereafter, plus possible license revocation. The DCA Youth Tobacco Enforcement and Prevention Program is made possible by a New York State grant administered by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Since the program formally began in 1998, compliance among City businesses has increased by more than 30%. To date for Fiscal Year 2006 (July 1, 2005 - June 30, 2006), DCA has conducted 15,118 inspections citywide. Currently, Staten Island has the highest rate of compliance among businesses in all five boroughs with 87%, followed by Manhattan at 86%, Brooklyn and Queens at 84%, and the Bronx at 78%.

"Cracking down on stores that sell cigarettes to kids is an important part of New York City's success in dramatically reducing smoking," said Executive Director of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids William Corr. "New York City is leading the nation in protecting its citizens from tobacco because the city has adopted a comprehensive approach that includes a high tax on tobacco products, a strong smoke-free workplace law that includes restaurants and bars, and effective tobacco prevention and cessation programs. But at least 30,000 New York City high school students still smoke, so it's critical that the City keep up its efforts to prevent youth from accessing tobacco products to maintain the great progress that's been made."

DCA Youth Tobacco Enforcement and Prevention Program pays teens \$7.25 an hour (plus MetroCards), and inspections are conducted every day. Those participating are also required to take a no-smoking pledge.

DCA licenses 55 different categories of businesses in New York City, including tobacco retailers, and enforces the City's Consumer Protection Law prohibiting deceptive practices. To report a business selling cigarettes to kids, or for more information, call 311, or visit the DCA website at www.nyc.gov/consumers.