

Convenience Store Group Encourages Members Not to Sell E-Cigarettes to Minors



The National Association of Convenience Stores is urging its members not to sell e-cigarettes to minors, the *Associated Press* reports.

The group represents more than 151,280 convenience stores.

The group says e-cigarettes should be treated like other age-restricted tobacco products.

In a statement, the group notes convenience stores are the largest retail channel for e-cigarette sales, with overall sales of almost \$540 million last year. "Given the uncertain status of e-cigarettes, it just makes sense that convenience stores check IDs as part of the more than 4.5 million age-verification checks that we already conduct every day," said Henry Armour, the group's president and CEO.

Armour told the AP, "We're sitting on the front lines. ... It is our responsibility to make sure that children don't have access to (e-cigarettes) in the event that they are risky products and could lead to somebody starting to smoke tobacco products."

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is expected to regulate e-cigarettes. According to the article, the FDA will likely ban sales to minors and impose restrictions on marketing. More than two dozen states have instituted laws prohibiting e-cigarette sales to minors. States are weighing questions including who should be able to use e-cigarettes, how they should be taxed, whether they should be subject to indoor smoking bans and whether they are tobacco products.

Health advocacy groups including the American Lung Association want e-cigarettes to be classified as tobacco products. They say the devices, which use flavored vapors, are marketed toward children. E-cigarette makers want the devices to be seen as a safer alternative to cigarettes, which can be used to quit smoking altogether.