



# Indiana State Excise Police News Release

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## **Few Stores Selling Tobacco to Juveniles**

**INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. (Jan. 20)** – Inspections by Indiana State Excise Police show that few Indiana businesses are willing to sell tobacco products to teenagers.

The Tobacco Retailer Inspection Program, a joint venture of the Indiana State Excise Police and Indiana Prevention Resource Center at Indiana University Bloomington, revealed that only 4.97% of stores inspected last year sold tobacco products to teens employed by the program.

In Indiana it is illegal for a clerk or a retail store to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18.

When TRIP was launched in 2000, more than 40% of stores sold tobacco to the program's teenagers. As a result of continual, year-round inspections, fewer than 5% of Indiana stores are willing to sell tobacco to underage customers.

During TRIP inspections, trained teenagers enter stores under the observation of a plainclothes police officer and attempt to buy a tobacco product. The program does not allow the teenagers to have any ID or lie to the clerk. If asked their age, the youth simply give their true age.

If a clerk sells tobacco to the teenager, the police officer will issue a Notice of Violation to both the clerk and the store. Fines for stores with violations range from \$200 for a first-time offense, then escalate for subsequent offenses, up to \$1,000.

"The success of the TRIP program at reducing the number of establishments willing to sell tobacco products to youth will improve the health and quality of their lives in the years to come," Superintendent Matt Strittmatter said. "Moreover, the primary mission of the State Excise Police is to reduce minors access to and use of alcohol and tobacco products – which will likely encourage our state's youth to live healthier lives in the long-term."

Additional information on TRIP can be found on the Indiana Prevention Resource Center's website at: [www.trip.indiana.edu](http://www.trip.indiana.edu). An interactive map of all violations across the state can be found at: [www.trip.indiana.edu/inspection\\_map.html](http://www.trip.indiana.edu/inspection_map.html).