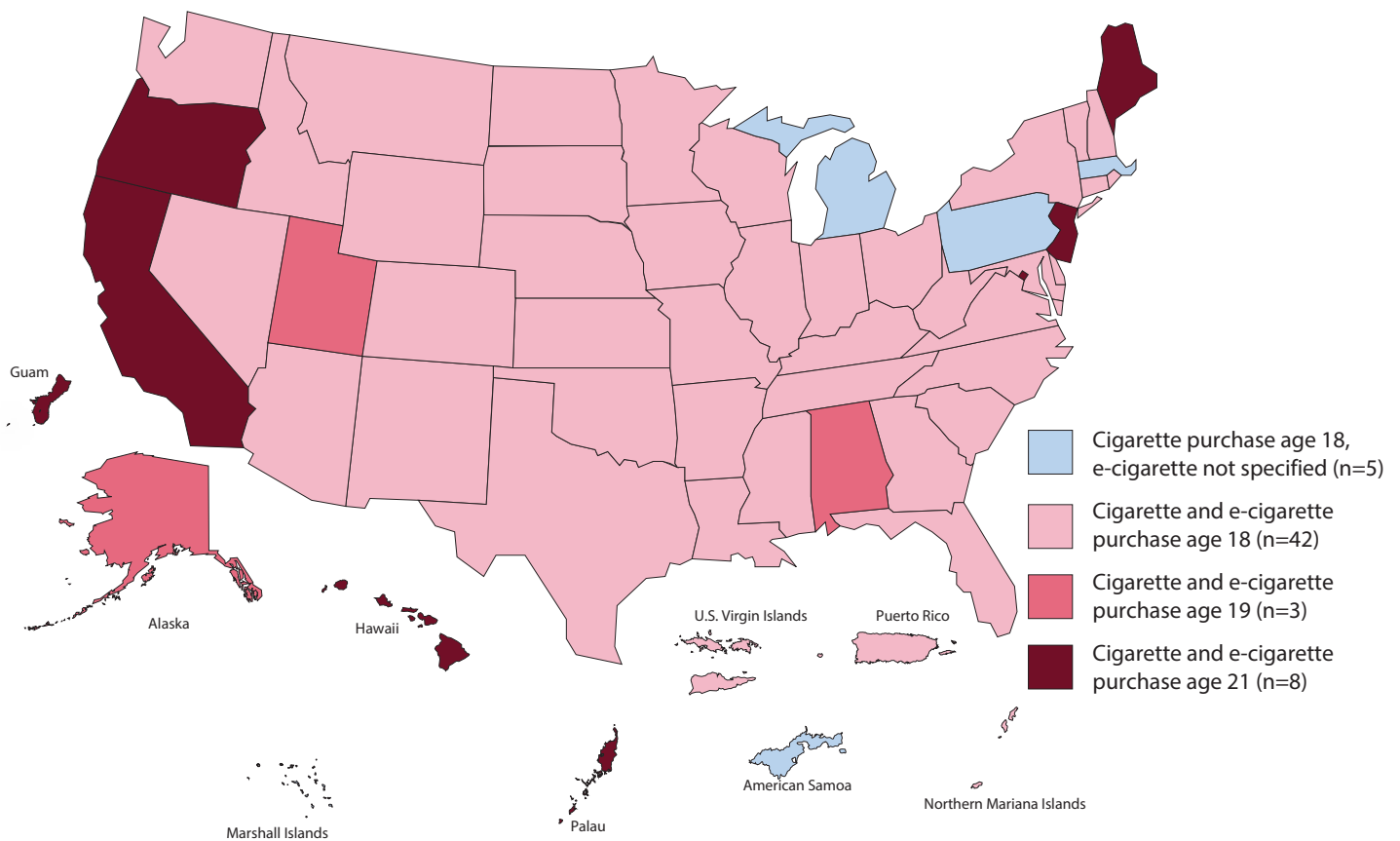


STATE System Tobacco 21 Fact Sheet

Minimum Legal Age for Purchasing Tobacco Products by Location

In effect as of September 30, 2018 (n=58)



In the United States, tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death.¹ More than 480,000 people die prematurely in the United States annually and another 16 million have a serious illness caused by smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke.¹ Each year, smoking costs the United States nearly \$170 billion in direct medical costs and more than \$156 billion in lost productivity.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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STATE System: [CDC.gov/STATESystem](https://www.cdc.gov/STATESystem)
OSHData: [CDC.gov/OSHData](https://www.cdc.gov/OSHData)
Office on Smoking and Health: [CDC.gov/Tobacco](https://www.cdc.gov/Tobacco)

Minimum Legal Age for Purchasing Tobacco Products in States and US Territories

In effect as of September 30, 2018 (n=58)

Location	Cigarettes Minimum Legal Age (MLA)	E-Cigarettes Minimum Legal Age (MLA)
Alabama	19	19
Alaska	19	19
American Samoa	18	No Provision
Arizona	18	18
Arkansas	18	18
California	21	21
Colorado	18	18
Connecticut	18	18
Delaware	18	18
District of Columbia	21	21
Florida	18	18
Georgia	18	18
Guam	21	21
Hawaii	21	21
Idaho	18	18
Illinois	18	18
Indiana	18	18
Iowa	18	18
Kansas	18	18
Kentucky	18	18
Louisiana	18	18
Maine	21	21
Marshall Islands	18	No Provision
Maryland	18	18
Massachusetts	18	No Provision
Michigan	18	No Provision
Minnesota	18	18
Mississippi	18	18
Missouri	18	18
Montana	18	18
Nebraska	18	18
Nevada	18	18
New Hampshire	18	18
New Jersey	21	21
New Mexico	18	18
New York	18	18
North Carolina	18	18
North Dakota	18	18
Northern Mariana Islands	18	18
Ohio	18	18
Oklahoma	18	18
Oregon	21	21
Palau	21	21
Pennsylvania	18	No Provision
Puerto Rico	18	18
Rhode Island	18	18
South Carolina	18	18
South Dakota	18	18
Tennessee	18	18
Texas	18	18
U.S. Virgin Islands	18	18
Utah	19	19
Vermont	18	18
Virginia	18	18
Washington	18	18
West Virginia	18	18
Wisconsin	18	18
Wyoming	18	18

The percentage of US adults who were current cigarette smokers declined from 20.8% in 2005 to 15.3% in 2015; however, the Healthy People 2020 target is 12%.^{2,3} The age tobacco users initiate smoking is key to understanding and preventing tobacco use. Approximately 90% of adult cigarette smokers report that they first tried smoking before the age of 18 years, and almost all did so before the age of 26 years.^{1,4,6}

All states and several territories have established a minimum legal age (MLA) to buy tobacco products in the United States. Raising the MLA from 18 to 21 years has been suggested by the Institute of Medicine as an effective public health intervention to help achieve national health objectives to reduce tobacco use.⁴ The long-term effect of raising the MLA to 21 years across the United States has the potential to lead to a decrease in cigarette smoking prevalence.^{4,5}

States Activity to Reduce the Use of Tobacco Products by Prohibiting Youth Access and Mandating Minimum Legal Age

As of September 30, 2018, five states (California, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, and Oregon) and the District of Columbia require a MLA of 21 years to purchase cigarettes and electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). Beginning on December 31, 2018, Massachusetts's MLA will increase to 21. Three states have a MLA of 19 years (Alabama, Alaska, and Utah) and all other states have an existing MLA of 18 years for the purchase of cigarettes. Additionally, 48 states and the District of Columbia include e-cigarettes in the state MLA. Two states (Michigan, and Pennsylvania) have no provisions establishing a MLA for e-cigarettes.

CDC tracks seven US Territories, American Samoa, Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Palau and the US Virgin Islands, all of which have a MLA of 18 years to purchase cigarettes, except Guam and Palau, which have an MLA of 21 to purchase cigarettes. The Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have a MLA requirement of 18 years to purchase e-cigarettes; Guam and Palau have a MLA requirement of 21, while American Samoa and the Marshall Islands have no provision establishing a MLA for e-cigarettes.

At the municipal level, there have been efforts to raise the MLA to 21 years. States with local laws in effect establishing MLA of 21 years include Illinois (26 localities), Kansas (22 localities), Missouri (17 localities), New York (22 localities), Ohio (14 localities), Minnesota (12 localities), Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Rhode Island and Michigan (2 localities each), and Mississippi and Texas (one locality each).

OSHData presents comprehensive tobacco prevention and control data in an online, easy to use, interactive data application.

Download the entire dataset from OSHData.

The STATE System contains data synthesized from state-level statutory laws. It does not contain state-level regulations; measures implemented by counties, cities, or other localities; opinions of Attorneys General; or relevant case law decisions for tobacco control topics other than preemption; all of which may vary significantly from the laws reported in the database, fact sheets, and publications.

References:

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