

Canadian Laws on Age of Smoking

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In Ontario alone, more than 3 000 children adhere to the tobacco market every month. The Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco makes the following eight recommendations that should be implemented across Canada:

- 1) make plain packaging the law,
- 2) prevent the sale of tobacco to minors,
- 3) ban tobacco advertising and promotion,
- 4) legislate provincial health warnings,
- 5) pass a Clean Indoor Air Act. In a 1990 staff report, environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), or second-hand smoke, inhaled by non-smokers and smokers was classified by US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a Class A cancer-causing agent. It is estimated that ETS-caused lung cancer in non-smokers now results in 100 deaths per year in Ontario alone. ETS-linked heart disease may increase this figure substantially. ETS is almost totally banned in federally-regulated workplaces. The general public deserves the same protection.
- 6) reduce the affordability of cigarettes, by increasing the price.
- 7) ban spitting tobacco,
- 8) strengthen public education campaigns.

How does Canada compare?

Tobacco prevalence in youth: % of youth actually smoking

Country	Age Group	Men	Women
Japan	15 - 17	20	4
Italy	12 - 19	22	21
Germany	14 - 19	31	23
USA	15 - 19	28	31
England	16 - 19	29	32
Australia	16 - 19	31	27
Canada	15 - 19	33	30
France	14 - 18	35	36
Ireland	18	45	29
India	17 - 20	3	
Mexico	11 - 15	16	15
Philippines	11 - 16	17	3
Pakistan	18 - 29	21	1
Nigeria	24	23	7
Ethiopia	17 - 20	31	5
Tunisia	12 - 19	37	20
Cuba	15 - 20	41	29
China	20 - 24	52	1
Peru	15 - 19	55	32

Source: WHO

Laws on Smoking

Federal Government:

On February 8, 1994, the legal smoking age went from 16 to 18 years. Health Canada advised retailers that it was illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under 18 years of age. The prohibition included vending machines. The offenders can now be fined up to 50,000\$, up from the previous 100\$ fine.

British Columbia:

The province amended its laws in 1992 requiring vendors to hold tobacco licences.

Alberta:

The legal age for smoking is 16 years.

Saskatchewan:

The Minors Tobacco Act, which prohibits sale of tobacco to those under 16 years, has not been amended since 1965.

Manitoba:

A 1990 law prohibits retailers from knowingly selling cigarettes to anyone under 18. Fines range from 1 000\$ for first offence to 5,000\$ for subsequent offences.

Ontario:

Legal smoking age is 16 years of age.

Quebec:

Legal smoking age is 16 years of age.

New Brunswick:

Legal smoking age is now 19 years of age. Fines in case of violation range from 50\$ to 2,500\$.

Prince Edward Island:

Sale of cigarettes to those under 18 years of age has been prohibited since 1991. After 3 offences the retailers may lose their licence. Fines range from 50\$ to 2,500\$.

Nova Scotia:

Legislation not yet passed would raise the smoking age to 19 and ban cigarettes from vending machines. Vendors caught selling to minors would be prohibited temporarily from selling tobacco.

Newfoundland:

Tobacco Control Act, introduced in legislature but not yet passed, would raise the legal smoking age to 19 from 16 and require vendors to obtain proof of age.