

Test purchases of medium-strong beer, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and refill containers, and over-the-counter medicines

This fact sheet contains information about test purchases and what they mean for those who sell or hand over medium-strong beer, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and refill containers, and over-the-counter medicines.

What are test purchases?

A test purchase is when somebody who looks young but is over the age of 18 sees whether it is possible to buy medium-strong beer (beer with an alcoholic strength by volume exceeding 2.25% but not 3.5%), tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and refill containers, or over-the-counter medicines without being asked to show proof of age by the seller or person handing out the product.

Why do regulations on test purchases exist?

Test purchases make it possible for municipalities to control that those who sell or hand over medium-strong beer, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and refill containers or over-the-counter medicines ensure that the person obtaining the product is 18 years old or over. The law prohibits these products from being sold or handed over to a person who is under 18 years of age. The Alcohol Act, Act on Tobacco and Similar Products, and the Act on Trade in Certain Non-Prescription Medicinal Products contain provisions on test purchases.

Ask for ID

The person who sells or hands over the product must make sure that the recipient is over 18 years of age. The easiest way to establish whether the recipient is old enough is to ask to see their ID. If the person does not have any ID or refuses to show it, you must not sell them

Information about test purchases

This information is aimed at retailers selling medium-strong beer, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and refill containers, and over-the-counter medicines, or the people who hand out these products. The electronic cigarettes and refill containers referred to in this fact sheet are those products which contain nicotine.

Provisions in the Alcohol Act (2010:1622), the Act on Tobacco and Similar Products (2018:2088) and the Act on Trade in Certain Non-Prescription Medicinal Products (2009:730) enable municipalities to conduct test purchases of medium-strong beer, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, refill containers and over-the-counter medicines.

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The purpose of test purchases

Municipalities conduct test purchases to find out how age checks work. Municipalities then use the results from the test purchases as a basis for creating a dialogue between the municipality and those selling or handing over these products. These dialogues support municipalities to help retailers develop successful age verification procedures. Retailers can also share their own experiences. The municipality may conduct test purchases without notifying you in advance.

As soon as the transaction has taken place, the municipality must inform you that it was a test purchase and inform you of the results.

The municipality may not use a test purchase as a basis for any administrative measures taken against you as a retailer. For example, the municipality will not be able to prohibit you from selling medium-strong beer, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and refill containers, or revoke a permit to sell tobacco products based on the results of a test purchase.

More information about test purchases is available on the Public Health Agency of Sweden's website.

www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/kontrollköp

Why are test purchases necessary?

Test purchases are a way to help retailers ensure that their age verification procedures work well. As part of the dialogue after the test purchase, the municipality can check whether you and your staff have understood the relevant regulations. The dialogue can also be used to inform you why age limits exist on sales of medium-strong beer, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and refill containers, and over-the-counter medicines. The municipality can inform you about the legal consequences of not asking to see a buyer's ID. Anyone who sells or provides people under the age of 18 with medium-strong beer, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and refill containers, or over-the-counter medicines can be fined or sent to prison.

Alcohol, tobacco and electronic cigarettes are addictive substances and pose health risks. The minimum age requirement limits young people's access to alcohol, tobacco products and/or electronic cigarettes, which in turn reduces the risk that they will begin using these products at a young age. If not used or handled properly, over-the-counter medicines can cause serious damage to a person's health.

As a retailer, you must do what is necessary to make sure these items are not sold or hand over to a person under the age of 18.

Self-monitoring of retailers

Retailers must ensure that the applicable laws are followed when selling medium-strong beer, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and refill containers and over-the-counter medicines. This is called self-monitoring. If you sell these products, you must have self-monitoring procedures in place that you and your staff follow to ensure you comply with the law. In the self-monitoring programme, you must establish procedures for checking that no products are sold to people aged under 18 years.

As a retailer, you must provide your staff with the information and support necessary to be able to follow sales regulations.

More information about self-monitoring can be obtained from the local municipality and via the links below.

Self-monitoring programme for tobacco and similar products

Visit the Public Health Agency of Sweden's website to read about the rules that apply and guidance for self-monitoring programmes when selling tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and refill containers.

folkhalsomyndigheten.se/egenkontroll/tobak

Self-monitoring programme for medium-strong beer

Read more about self-monitoring for sales of medium-strong beer.

folkhalsomyndigheten.se/egenkontroll/folkol

Over-the-counter medicines

Visit the Swedish Medical Products Agency's website to read more about regulations and guidance for self-monitoring programmes for sales of over-the-counter medicines.

<https://www.lakemedelsverket.se/sv>