

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# Stop Tobacco Access to Kids Enforcement Act

- **How old do you have to be to join the S.T.A.K.E. Act program?**

You must be at least 14 years old and no more than 16 years old. The program cannot allow you to participate on or after your 17th birthday.

- **What do I need to apply for S.T.A.K.E. Act?**

You need to fill out the application packet and obtain a CA ID (or CA license or military ID). If you need a CA ID, visit any DMV to apply for one. When you go to the DMV, you will need your **ORIGINAL** birth certificate and \$23.00. Ask for a California ID application. When you send us the receipt from the DMV, we will reimburse your family the \$23.00. **Send applications and DMV receipts to S.T.A.K.E. Act 4948 N. Arthur Ave., Fresno, Ca 93705.**

- **What are the rewards for being an undercover youth agent?**

For signing up, you will receive up to a \$50 gift card. When you work, you will receive \$5.00 per store visited whether you get sold tobacco or not. You will also be provided with food coupons, movie passes, and possibly more.

At the age of 17, all youth volunteers receive a letter of recommendation from the American Lung Association for volunteering in S.T.A.K.E. Act.

- **How often will I work?**

You may or may not work. The Food and Drug Branch investigators try and visit each county every other year. If you are called to volunteer, you may work once or several times. On average, youth who work with the FDB visit 15-20 stores in one day. But there are youth who work less.

- **Do I have to dress up a certain way when I work?**

No! Be yourself. We ask that you be honest about your age and demeanor. We are not trying to trick anyone. We expect that stores check your ID and refuse to sell to you, but that is not always the case.

- **How do I know when I'm working? Who picks me up?**

There are two agencies who may call you to set up an appointment for work. The Food and Drug Branch or the Behavioral Health Institute is in charge of scheduling all youth volunteers over the phone. They usually call a couple weeks in advance and direct you from there. These state agents strictly survey for illegal sales of tobacco. Compliance checks are carried out year-round. Agents pick you up after school or from home. When you work, they transport you store to store and take care of any meals.

- **Where will you take me when I work?**

Any store in the state with a tobacco license is eligible for a compliance check, such as liquor stores, grocery stores, cigar/hookah stores, etc. To complete these compliance checks, you will most likely work outside your own neighborhood. We try to coordinate that you work in other cities and possibly other counties.

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- **What happens if a store sells me cigarettes? Do they get fined?**

If a store sells tobacco to you, all you do is return to your supervisor who will be in the car outside. You hand them the receipt, change, and merchandise.

Fines are ordered out days after you were at the store and no one will know who you were. The protection of our youth identity is crucial for the success of this program. Fines vary per offense, from \$600 for the first offense and up to \$6,000 for multiple violations.

- **Can I get in trouble if a store tries to go to court over the fine?**

In the 11 years of STAKE Act, no one has gone to court over an offense. By federal law, your identity is protected. We collect evidence during compliance checks, including receipts of sale. Some volunteers are videotaped during compliance checks for evidence.

- **Is S.T.A.K.E. Act dangerous?**

The Food and Drug Branch has successfully completed over 13,000 compliance checks with no incidents of injury.

- **I live in a small community. What if someone recognizes me?**

The program is highly motivated to protect your identity. We will not take you into your immediate community, unless you are comfortable with that. We may even take you into a bordering county, protecting your identity definitely.

- **I did this once for the Health Department. How is S.T.A.K.E. Act different?**

No, the compliance checks you may have participated in with your local health department are for their county statistical data collection. The “undercover” compliance checks you would do for S.T.A.K.E. Act are Federally mandated due to an act passed in 1992 called the Synar Amendment. The Synar Amendment, calls for states to pass and enforce laws that prohibit the sale of tobacco products to minors. It led to the passing of the Stop Tobacco Access To Kids Enforcement Act (S.T.A.K.E. Act) in 1994. The data collected from these undercover compliance checks are used to determine California’s sales to minor rate. This number determines the amount of money made available from the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block grant for various health programs. The local health department compliance checks and the S.T.A.K.E. Act compliance checks are two separate data collection activities.

- **Does the FDB contact the health departments before or after a compliance check is performed in that county?**

No. They usually do not contact the health departments. However, we have started updating the Local Lead Agency Tobacco Control representative on how many stores were visited, the dates, and the sale outcomes to help them with statistical data. However, we only get this information after the compliance checks have already taken place.

- **What if I sign up and I never get called for work? Why should I join?**

Even if you don’t get the opportunity to work, you will still receive many complementary incentives up to \$50.00. You also get us to pay for a California ID (a \$23.00 value) if you complete the application process. You also receive a letter of recommendation from the American Lung Association for college or job applications.

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- **Where do you find youth volunteers?**

We recruit by radio, ads, high school newspapers, health fairs, youth coalitions, school presentations, recommended friends, youth after-school programs and many non-profit youth organizations.

- **How can I apply or get more information?**

Our website is [www.stakeact.com](http://www.stakeact.com). It has information about our program and has the application available for printing. **Send applications to S.T.A.K.E. Act 4948 N. Arthur Ave., Fresno, Ca 93705.** Applications must be sent via U.S. mail because we need original signatures from you and your guardians.

- **Can I call you if I have any questions about my application?**

Yes. Our toll free line is available 24 hrs a day (1-877-782-5343) and we will do whatever it takes to assist you in your application process. We will also be calling you if you send in your application or interest form. Make sure that the address and telephone number you give us is where you can be easily reached.