

Before we move into presentations and public comment, I'd like to briefly summarize the draft regulation under consideration by the Easthampton Board of Health.

This regulation is grounded in the City's responsibility to protect public health—particularly when it comes to limiting youth access to tobacco and nicotine products. While state law already prohibits sales to individuals under 21, evidence continues to show that youth access and early nicotine addiction remain ongoing concerns.

The purpose of this regulation is fourfold:

- **To reduce youth use of tobacco and nicotine products**
- **To prevent future generations from becoming addicted to nicotine**
- **To provide clear expectations and education for retailers**
- **And to reduce the long-term health impacts associated with nicotine use**

This proposal is supported by extensive public health research showing that most lifelong nicotine addiction begins in adolescence, that nicotine can impact brain development, that the tobacco industry has historically targeted young people, and that the availability of retail outlets influences youth use.

As part of this draft regulation, the Board is considering seven key policy changes. These are being presented tonight for public input, and no final decisions have been made.

1. Permit Renewal Restrictions

Retailers would not be eligible to renew their permit after three violations for selling to individuals under 21 or under the Nicotine-Free Generation (NFG) standard. This builds on existing regulations by incorporating both underage and NFG-related violations.

Repeated violations demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance that undermines public health protections. Limiting permit renewal after multiple violations creates accountability, incentivizes retailer compliance, and reinforces the seriousness of preventing illegal sales to youth and under the Nicotine-Free Generation (NFG) standard.

2. Nicotine-Free Generation Policy

This would establish a birth-year cutoff for nicotine sales. Individuals who are 21 or older as of the effective date would remain eligible to purchase nicotine products. Those younger would never become eligible to purchase these products in Easthampton.

Most nicotine addiction begins before age 21, and individuals who do not start using nicotine in adolescence are far less likely to become addicted later in life. Establishing a birth-year cutoff gradually phases out access over time, preventing future addiction without impacting current legal purchasers.

3. Reducing the Retail Cap

No new tobacco permits would be issued, and any permits returned to the Board of Health would be

permanently retired.

Research shows that higher densities of tobacco retailers are associated with increased youth access and use. Capping and gradually reducing the number of retailers decreases product availability, limits exposure, and supports long-term reductions in community-wide nicotine use.

4. Minimum Cigar Package Size and Price Update

This would increase minimum pricing and packaging requirements to limit access to low-cost and, single cigars. **F1 F2 from \$5 to 5:80 2:50 to \$ 2:90**

Low-cost, single cigars are disproportionately used by youth due to their affordability and accessibility. Increasing minimum pricing and packaging requirements reduces impulse purchases and youth initiation by removing the cheapest entry points into tobacco use.

5. Nicotine Pouch Sales Restricted to Adult-Only Retailers

These products would only be allowed to be sold in 21+ retail establishments.

Nicotine pouches are often flavored, discreet, and easy to conceal, making them particularly appealing to young people. Restricting sales to adult-only establishments reduces youth exposure and access while still allowing legal adult purchase.

6. Standardized Suspension Periods

Violations would carry consistent penalties:

- First violation: 3-day suspension **Q sets 3 days mandatory**
- Second violation: 7-day suspension
- Third or subsequent violations: 30-day suspension

Consistent and clearly defined penalties ensure fair enforcement across all retailers while strengthening deterrence. Standardization removes ambiguity, improves compliance, and reinforces that violations carry meaningful consequences.

All else are the same

7. Buffer Zones for New Retailers

No new permits would be issued within 1,000 feet of a school or another tobacco retailer.

500 fet school

Proximity to schools and other retailers increases youth exposure to tobacco products and marketing. Establishing buffer zones reduces environmental cues and access points, helping to limit youth initiation and normalize tobacco-free spaces.

Closing Transition

this proposal represents a comprehensive, forward-looking approach to reducing nicotine access—particularly among young people—while establishing clear and consistent expectations for retailers. It also aligns our community with similar regulations already adopted by neighboring municipalities, strengthening the overall impact of a nicotine-free generation (NFG) approach.

Tonight, we are here to listen. We welcome your feedback on any aspect of this proposal—whether specific provisions or the overall approach—as the Board considers its next steps.