

# Information for Tobacco Sales Clerks about Acceptable Forms of ID

Pursuant to MGL ch. 270 sec. 6, it is illegal to sell tobacco products to any person under the age of 21. Retailers are required to check identification (ID) for any tobacco purchase. Only government-issued photo identification can be accepted as proof of age. Additional information is available at [www.mass.gov/dph/mtcp](http://www.mass.gov/dph/mtcp).

## What is a government-issued photo ID?

In Massachusetts the accepted forms of ID are: a valid Massachusetts Drivers' License or out-of-state drivers' license; a valid Massachusetts Liquor ID Card or a Massachusetts ID Card (both are issued by the Registry of Motor Vehicles); a valid Military ID; a valid passport issued by the United States or from a country recognized by the US; or a US Immigration Card.

See examples of government-issued photo IDs on the back of this sheet.

## What differences should I look for on the Vertical Identification Cards?

Vertical IDs (cards that are up and down) signify that the holder is under 21 years of age. Individuals can, in some cases, retain the vertical card even after turning 21 depending on when it was issued and the expiration date. Be sure to check the date of birth carefully!

## What kinds of ID should I NOT accept?

Work and school ID cards, ID without photos, and forms of state-issued ID not listed in above section are not appropriate to verify a customer's age.



## What other tips are there for checking IDs?

- Check the ID before you retrieve the product.
- Have the customer remove the ID from their wallet so you can both feel and see the card for oddities.
- Be sure to check that the ID picture matches the person, the birthdate makes sense and is valid, that there are no odd bumps or ridges on the card which can indicate tampering, and that the lettering is consistent.
- If in doubt ask the customer questions such as their zip code.
- If you have doubts about the ID or suspect an adult is buying for a minor, refuse the sale.
- Out-of-state IDs – Even though out-of-state IDs look different, each contains the information you need to verify the customer's age and authenticity of the ID card such as a picture and date of birth. Follow the same guidelines (listed above) when checking out-of-state IDs.

**Remember you must ask for ID for ALL TOBACCO PRODUCTS not just cigarettes**

Direct questions to: Massachusetts Department of Health 1-800-992-1895

TDD/TTY 617-624-6001 | [www.mass.gov/dph/mtcp](http://www.mass.gov/dph/mtcp)

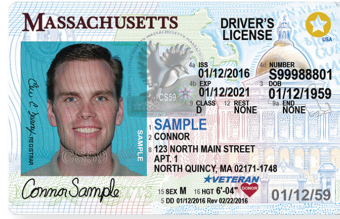
For more information, contact  
your local Board of Health.

# Information for Tobacco Sales Clerks about Acceptable Forms of ID

## Examples of government-issued photo IDs



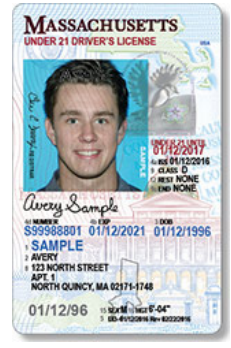
MA License no longer being issued as of July 2016; will be in circulation until June 2021.



New MA License as of July 2016. Real IDs are now being issued and have a star in the upper right corner. IDs that are not Real IDs do not have a star.



MA Under 21 License no longer being issued as of July 2016; will be in circulation until July 2021.



New MA Under 21 License as of July 2016.



MA Liquor ID no longer being issued as of July 2016; will be in circulation until June 2021.



New Liquor ID as of July 2016.



MA Under 21 ID no longer being issued as of July 2016; will be in circulation until June 2021.



New MA Under 21 ID as of July 2016.



Military ID



US Passport



US Immigration Card

For more information, contact your local Board of Health.