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Stores still selling kids smokes

Last updated Jun 14 2005 09:38 AM ADT

[CBC News](#)

CHARLOTTETOWN — The Binns government continues to let retailers caught selling cigarettes to minors off the hook.

And that's left one Ottawa researcher saying that's why the Island continues to have one of the worst compliance rates in the country.

Around 20 stores are caught selling smokes to kids every year. None are charged, and the province has not fined a store for illegal sales in almost four years.

Last November, a health department spokesperson told the CBC a legal technicality prevented inspectors from laying charges.

Jerry Gavin explained the guilty person behind the counter wasn't always the vendor. So last fall, the province brought in a bill that was supposed to correct that.

But the regulations are not written yet.

Nik Nanos said P.E.I. should take this issue more seriously. He heads an Ottawa research company called SES.

His company sent under-aged mystery shoppers to 186 stores on the Island. Fifty agreed to sell to them cigarettes.

Nanos said this year's results are similar to other years, and P.E.I. continues to be significantly worse than the national average.

"If compliance is to improve in Prince Edward Island, and tobacco is to be kept out of the hands of children something will have to be done."

"The research shows that we're in a bit of a holding pattern, that for the numbers to move, there either has to be more education for retailers or laws that are enforced," added Nanos.





Dawn Binns, who is with the Canadian Cancer Society on P.E.I., is disappointed retailers here can still sell tobacco to kids without fear of consequence.

"We know that education alone isn't going to deter to sell to minors. So we really need to see charges being laid, so that becomes the deterrent to selling to minors in the future."

One of the province's lawyers said she hopes the new tobacco regulations will be ready in about a month.

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