

YOUTH TOBACCO USE

Tobacco is generally the first drug used by young people who enter a sequence of drug use that can include tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and harder drugs such as cocaine and heroin.

According to the 1994 Surgeon General's report, 12-17 year olds who reported having smoked in the past 30 days were:

- three times more likely to use alcohol,
- eight times more likely to smoke marijuana, and
- 22 times more likely to use cocaine,

within those past 30 days than those 12-17 year olds who had not smoked during that time.

Tobacco is a "Gateway" Drug

- ★ Generally the first peer-shared drug experience, or first illicit drug experience, similar to using Marijuana as it is usually hidden and outside most family and general societal acceptance standards
- ★ Smoking cigarettes can facilitate later drug use by teaching how to deeply inhale and hold smoke in the lungs
- ★ Teaches concept of drug "dosing" - A skill used for smoking marijuana, hashish, or free-basing crack cocaine

Youth smoking can be a direct correlation to many of our headline community issues. Some argue that allowing youth access to tobacco is simply increasing the incidence of community problems and populating our streets with potential criminals.

Illegal drug use is rare among those who have never smoked and cigarette smoking is likely to precede the use of alcohol and illicit drugs.

(National Survey Results on Drug Use from the Monitoring the Future Study, 1975,* The University of Michigan)

TEXAS STEP

Located at Texas State University-San Marcos, as a part of the Department of Criminal Justice in the College of Applied Arts, Texas Statewide Tobacco Education & Prevention (Texas STEP) provides public awareness information on the tobacco laws, best practices and protocols to enforce the laws, and ways to increase tobacco awareness at the local level.

Texas STEP was founded in 1993 to provide training and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies after the passage of the Federal SYNAR Amendment. In 1997, Texas put into effect one of the strongest and most comprehensive tobacco laws in the country with the passage of Senate Bill 55, 75th Legislature. Texas STEP plays an integral role in the implementation of Senate Bill 55.

Aimed at reducing youth access to tobacco products by eliminating the illegal sale of tobacco to children, this law provides for comprehensive retailer education & inspections of retailers by law enforcement to ensure compliance.

Texas STEP provides training and technical assistance throughout the state of Texas. Participating law enforcement agencies receive updates on the law, are provided

strategies and curricula on compliance education, are informed on the health consequences of youth tobacco use, are made aware of their legal reporting responsibilities, and can receive in-service training on the enforcement protocols.

YOUTH SMOKING & THE RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

1992 National Health Interview Survey of Youth Risk Behavior
National Center for Health Statistics

Other Problem Behaviors	Never Smoked	Current Youth Smoker
Alcohol use in past month	23.0%	74.4%
Five or more drinks in a row (binge drinking)	9.5%	50.3%
Marijuana use in past 30 days	1.5%	26.5%
Smokeless tobacco use in past 30 days (boys)	4.1%	28.1%
Carried a weapon	9.5%	25.6%
Physical fight in past year	29.0%	54.7%

*N=10,645 persons, age 12-21 years of age

Texas STEP can be reached at
1-888-STEP-123 or
on the Internet at
WWW.TEXAS-STEP.ORG

Texas STEP's Model of Enforcement

Reducing youth access is the ultimate goal of applying the elements of Texas STEP's Model of Enforcement.

Compliance with our state's tobacco control laws sends a message to the public that community leaders believe these policies are important.

In Texas, this effort involves a multi-pronged approach: 1) providing compliance education to retailers and school-aged youth; 2) enforcing laws on retail sales of tobacco products to children and; 3) citing minors who are in possession of tobacco.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, numerous studies have shown that a combination of educating retailers and active, graduated enforcement of tobacco access laws is most effective in reducing illegal sales to minors.

The six components of Texas STEP's Model of Enforcement are:

1. Compliance Education of Tobacco Retailers
2. Compliance Inspections
3. Controlled Buys/Stings
4. Follow up on Violators and Non-Violators
5. Compliance Education of School-Aged Youth
6. Enforcement of Minor in Possession (MIP) of Tobacco Laws



Reducing the Illegal Sales of Tobacco to Texas' Children



Texas Statewide Tobacco Education & Prevention

Toll-Free:
1-888-STEP-123

E-mail:
info@texas-step.org

On the Internet at:
WWW.TEXAS-STEP.ORG