

## CHAPTER 123

### TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL ACCESS PREVENTION PROGRAM

DISCUSSION: The Hattiesburg Police Department recognizes the increased numbers of underage individuals who participate in the illegal act of possessing and using tobacco and alcohol products. The Department also recognizes the fact that tobacco and alcohol use is often viewed as a possible "gateway" to harder substances. With almost 30 schools serving over 12,000 students inside the city limits, the Department realizes there is a strong need to help prevent the use of these products by underage individuals. The purpose of this directive is to establish an Access Prevention Program to reduce the accessibility of alcohol and tobacco products to underage persons through the use of education, enforcement and undercover compliance checks.

#### 123.1 ADMINISTRATION

##### 123.1.1 Goals and Objectives of the Access Prevention Program

The Access Prevention Program will be managed by the Community Relations Division of the Hattiesburg Police Department. The ultimate goal is the reduction of the use of alcohol and tobacco products by juveniles through the following:

- A.     Retailer Compliance Education. The Hattiesburg Police Department will schedule sessions to educate retailers about the unlawful sale of tobacco and alcohol to juveniles and the penalties involved.
- B.     Youth Advisory Board. The Department will collaborate with local youth groups such as the Explorers, Boys and Girls Club, Scouts and etc. to form a Youth Advisory Board. Sworn officers will be involved in the project to work on enforcement and education issues.
- C.     Community Groups Involvement. The Department will work closely with community groups to assist in alcohol and tobacco education, handing out pamphlets or other materials that describe the harmful effects of alcohol and tobacco use, thus encouraging their advocacy.
- D.     Periodic Enforcement Checks. The Department will devise a system of random checks at retail establishments and distributors and assign an officer to conduct visual inspections. The Department will also conduct controlled buys using minors to check for compliance.

#### 123.2 OPERATIONS

##### 123.2.1 Selection of Target Areas

The Hattiesburg Police Department will develop a system of random checks at retailers designating specific areas based on information from citizen's complaints, Officer

observations, etc. The times of the checks would be determined based on the presence of juveniles. This would be times that juveniles are most likely to be located in the area such as, after school during the evening hours and at night especially on Friday and Saturday when teenagers are likely to be out in large numbers. High attention would be placed on stores relatively close to or around school properties during school hours.

A list will be made and maintained of stores to be surveyed or checked. The list will include stores from all parts of the city. Dates and times of compliance checks will be maintained along with the results of the checks or inspections as to the disposition, i.e. arrest, citations, warnings or in compliance.

#### 123.2.2 Controlled Buys

Periodically, the Department will conduct compliance checks by juveniles to make controlled buys at randomly selected stores. Buys will be made under the supervision of a sworn officer of Hattiesburg Police Department. The use of video and/or audio recording devices will be authorized during these buys for preservation and presentation of evidence.

Juveniles who participate in these controlled buys will do so of their own free will and with a parent or guardians permission (Subjects 18 or older who participate in controlled buys of alcohol will not need parental consent). To avoid the appearance of entrapment, only juveniles who clearly look under age and who have a valid ID showing them to be under age will be used for making controlled buys.