

RAISING THE AGE OF SALE OF KNIVES AND CERTAIN ARTICLES WITH A BLADE OR POINT



CHECKLIST FOR EMPLOYERS

From **Monday, October 1st 2007** the law for selling knives and certain articles with a blade or point will change. From then on, it will be illegal to sell these items to anyone **under the age of 18** (an increase from 16). The ban includes any knife, knife blade, razor blade or axe and includes any other article which has a blade or which is sharply pointed and which is made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person.

There are a number of things you can do to ensure you and your staff are ready when the change comes into force:

- Clearly display the correct signage on your shop counter. This should deter under-aged customers from attempting to buy in the first place and will help in reminding them that you and your staff are simply following the law.
- Tell your staff about the change in the law and train them to always ask for proof of age if they are in any doubt about a customer's age. Make sure your staff understand that they could be personally liable if they sell to people under 18 years old.
- Keep a record of the training and ask the member of staff to sign to say that they have understood it. This should then be kept on file for reference.
- Set up a refusals register to record when you or any member of staff have refused to sell to a young person. This should log the date and time of any incident, the product being purchased, reason for refusal, and a brief description of the customer. This should be available for all staff to refer to.
- We don't anticipate that this change in the law will result in a significant increase in the number of incidents where customers become aggressive when refused sale. However, there may be some 16 and 17 year olds who are unhappy about being refused after October 1st. Staff should be made aware that if any serious incident of abuse occurs, it should be reported to the police.
- You should also be prepared to support and be sensitive to staff if they do encounter abusive or threatening behaviour.
- Consider ways in which you can share intelligence about troublesome individuals with other businesses in the area.
- If you employ under-18s in your business, it is not illegal for them to sell knives and certain articles with a blade or point, provided of course that the customer is not under-age. However, they may find it difficult to refuse to sell to their own age group, so leaving them unsupervised is not recommended.
- If you possess an EPOS system, it may be possible to use it to remind staff of the details of the change and what to do to be compliant, via a prompt.

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GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

From **Monday, October 1st 2007** the law for selling knives and certain articles with a blade or point will change. From then on, it will be illegal to sell these items to anyone **under the age of 18** (an increase from 16). The ban includes any knife, knife blade, razor blade or axe and includes any other article which has a blade or which is sharply pointed and which is made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person.

If you are in any doubt about a person's age, always ask for proof of age. Valid proof of age documents include passports, photo driving licences, or accredited proof of age cards such as a Citizencard, Portman 'Prove It' card or Validate card. On all proof of age cards, look for the 'PASS' hologram logo.

If you are still in doubt, the sale should not be allowed to take place. Remember, you could be personally liable if you do sell to someone under the legal age.

With any sale you refuse because a customer is under-age, or does not have valid proof of age, make sure you log the details on the refusals register that your employer will have set up.

There are some 16 and 17 year olds who will be unhappy about the change coming in on October 1st. In order to avoid potential conflict with customers when refusing a sale:

- Be tactful and polite. Refusal can be embarrassing. Apologise and don't antagonise them or get annoyed yourself.
- Remain calm and don't be tempted to raise your voice, even if they do. If they get angry, stay professional and stand your ground.
- Explain that it is against the law for you to sell knives and certain articles with a blade or point to them - it's nothing personal.
- Always keep the counter between you and the customer.
- In a situation where a customer becomes violent and you are in need of emergency assistance, you should call the police.
- Ensure that you have somewhere to escape to in the case of a serious incident.
- Report any incident to the police.
- If you are unsure about any of the above, speak to your employer/manager.