

## The Latest: San Francisco raises tobacco buying age to 21

Updated 4:33 pm, Tuesday, March 1, 2016



IMAGE 1 OF 5

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Natalie Richards, 19, smokes a cigarette as she sits with her friends Ben Rose, center, and Chase Melich, right, in a Designated Smoking Area at San Francisco State University as supervisors consider a plan to ... [more](#)

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SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The Latest on an effort to raise the tobacco buying age to 21 in San Francisco (all times local):

3:20 p.m.

San Francisco officials unanimously approved an ordinance boosting the legal age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21.

The ordinance approved by the [Board of Supervisors](#) on Tuesday applies to all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes. The city joins New York City and Boston in setting the minimum age at 21.

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Supervisor **Scott Wiener**, chief sponsor of the legislation, said raising the age limit will discourage young people from turning into lifelong smokers.

Opponents argue that California law set the age at 18 and that provision prohibits cities and counties from setting a higher limit.

A 2015 report by the **Institute of Medicine** found that 90 percent of daily smokers first tried a cigarette before age 19.

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1:50 a.m.

Supervisors in San Francisco are voting Tuesday on whether to increase the minimum age to buy tobacco from 18 to 21, even as opponents argue that cities and counties cannot trump California state law.

The ordinance would apply to all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.

The issue has gained traction nationally as lawmakers try to discourage young people from starting to smoke. A 2015 report by the Institute of Medicine found that 90 percent of daily smokers first tried a cigarette before the age of 19.

Opponents argue that California state law already has a minimum age of 18, and that provision prohibits cities and counties from setting a higher limit.

The minimum age to buy tobacco is 21 in New York City, Boston and Hawaii.

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