



**COUNTER  
TOBACCO**

# TOBACCO RETAILER NATION

*Communities are saturated with fast food restaurants,  
but what about tobacco retailers?  
What if our Fast Food Nation is really a  
Tobacco Retailer Nation?*

***FIND OUT***

***HOW YOUR COMMUNITY STACKS UP WITH THIS ACTIVITY***



## *Why is this important?*

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, contributing to more cases of disease, disability and death than poor nutrition.<sup>1</sup> The prevalence and placement of tobacco retailers plays a major role in the epidemic of tobacco related illness in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Tobacco retailer density is the number of outlets selling tobacco for a given geographic location or population size. More retailers in an area means there is higher density; higher density means easier access to tobacco and higher amounts of tobacco product advertising, tempting use initiation and making it harder to quit. Research has shown that higher tobacco retailer density is positively correlated with smoking by both adults and adolescents.<sup>4,5</sup> It is estimated that 500,000 stores in the U.S. sell cigarettes and, all too often, these stores are located near schools and other areas that youth frequent.<sup>3,4</sup> The purpose of this activity is to increase awareness about tobacco retailer density in your community.

## *This activity is best suited for*

**Age Group:** 9th - 12th grade, College

**Number of Participants:** Variable based on size of the area selected and the number of fast food restaurants and retailers you include; consider a teams of 2-4 students per one neighborhood or city.

**Preparation Time:** Variable; 1-2 hours per area selected

**Activity Duration:** Variable; 2-4 hours per area selected

**Materials:** Computers with internet access

**Cost:** \$0 (if you already have computer access!)

**Best suited for:** A tech savvy group with access to a list of retailer addresses



## *What will youth do during Tobacco Retailer Nation?*

Participants will map tobacco retailers and fast food restaurants in their community. This activity will show the density of tobacco retailers — the number of outlets selling tobacco for a given geographic location or population size — compared with fast food restaurant density. This exercise can create a compelling argument and visual evidence for limiting the number of tobacco retailers.



## Activity Preparation

- Decide what geographic area you want to focus on for the activity. You could choose the zip code, city, or county level.
- In your group, think of the popular fast food chains in your town. Decide which one(s) you want to use.
  - Use the Store Locator on fast food chains' websites to find out addresses and make sure you don't forget any stores.
- Identify the tobacco retailers in your area
  - Find tobacco retailer data from local or state licensing lists, **SYNAR data location:**  
<http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention/synar.aspx>  
or your own brainpower and knowledge of your town!

## The Activity

- Divide up the investigation. Assign either a fast food chain or a tobacco retailer category (pharmacy, gas station, convenience store or supermarket) to each person/pair.
- Map the locations! Using Google Maps, create a shared map that everyone in your group has access to. If you don't already use Google Maps, learn how to make a custom map **here**:  
<http://support.google.com/maps/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=62843&topic=1687289&ctx=topic>

Use different color pins to show fast food chains vs. tobacco retailers.

- Don't have access to Google Maps?
  - Use a printed map and different color thumb tacks to show the different stores
  - Make a pictograph to represent the number of stores in each category

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### *Pictograph Example: 3:1 Ratio of a Tobacco Retailer to a Fast Food Chain*



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- Figure out some stats!
    - Determine the ratio of tobacco retailers to the fast food chain you selected.
    - Use the population of your geographic area to find out how many tobacco retailers vs. fast food restaurants there are per person
    - Use the area to find out how many tobacco retailers vs. fast food restaurants there are per square mile in your geographic area

**Bonus:** Map out where the schools are in relation to the tobacco retailers and fast food chains, in order to show the proximity between youth and tobacco. If you have time, add in parks, community centers and/or places of worship.

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***Want more?? Check out some ideas for follow up activities on the next page! ➡***

## Follow Up Activities

- Make multiple teams and try to tackle the whole county! This could be a great year-round activity.
- Send your finalized map and statistics to your legislators. Many adults are unaware of the number of tobacco retailers and also their proximity to schools.
- Turn your map into a game for events. Have people guess which pins represent fast food chains and which are tobacco retailers. Write up your statistics without the numbers and have people try to fill in the blanks.
- Visit [Countertobacco.org](http://countertobacco.org) to learn about how **licensing and zoning restrictions**:  
<http://countertobacco.org/licensing-zoning-and-retailer-density>  
can be used to limit the number of tobacco retailers in your community.



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## References

1. Mokdad AH, Marks JS, Stroup DF, Gerberding JL. (2004). Actual causes of death in the United States, 2000. *JAMA*, 291(10), 1238-45.
2. Banthin, C., Tobacco Control Legal Consortium. (2010). Regulating Tobacco Retailers: Options for State and Local Governments. [http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/tclc-fs-retailers-2010\\_0.pdf](http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/tclc-fs-retailers-2010_0.pdf).
3. Counter Tobacco. (2012). Licensing, Zoning and Retailer Density. <http://countertobacco.org/licensing-zoning-and-retailer-density>.
4. Henriksen L, Feighery EC, Schleicher NC, Cowling DW, Kline RS, Fortmann SP. (2008). Is adolescent smoking related to the density and proximity of tobacco outlets and retail cigarette advertising near schools? *Preventive Medicine*, 47(2):210-4.
5. Henriksen, L. (2012). Comprehensive tobacco marketing restrictions: promotion, packaging, price and place. *Tobacco Control*, 21(2): 147-53.