



**COUNTER
TOBACCO**

WALKING TOBACCO AUDIT

Can you guess how many tobacco retailers the kids in your community see on their way to school?

***DON'T KNOW?
HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO FIND OUT!***



WHAT IS A WALKING TOBACCO AUDIT?



This walking tobacco audit offers youth a chance to see how many tobacco retailers and how many tobacco advertisements are located along their route to school.

Why is this important?

Point of sale (POS), or the retail environment, has been a primary venue for tobacco industry advertising and promotions. Exposure to POS advertising and promotions prompts smoking initiation, encourages tobacco use, and undermines quit attempts.^{1,2} Youth are three times more sensitive than adults to tobacco advertising.³ Each day, almost 4,000 kids in the United States try their first cigarette and an additional 1,000 kids under age 18 become new, daily smokers.⁴ That's over 400,000 new underage daily smokers each year.⁴ The purpose of this activity is to raise awareness of youth exposure to tobacco marketing.

This activity is best suited for

Age Group: 8th - 12th grade

Number of Participants: 4-6

Preparation time: 3-4 weeks

Activity Duration: 2-4 hours

Materials: Audit form, route map, clipboards, pencils, digital camera, poster board, stickers/push pins for visual display, comfortable walking attire

Cost: \$0-\$50

Best suited for: Urban environments

**This guide is intended for youth group leaders.*



What will the kids in my youth group be doing during a walking tobacco audit?

Participants will identify the number of tobacco retailers along the major routes to school and tally the tobacco advertisement that can be seen from **outside** those stores. Youth will take photographs of tobacco advertisements to create a visual display of their findings.

How do I conduct a walking tobacco audit?

3-4 Weeks Before Event

- Contact local town legislators to schedule a time for youth to share the results of their tobacco audit.

1-2 Weeks Before Event

- Identify your walk route. You could choose to walk along a designated school bus route or develop your own route based on your school district's walk zones. You can find this information on your school district's website. Either way, be strategic in your choice to make sure there are tobacco retailers on your route.
- Contact local newspapers and news stations to tell them you will be conducting a walking tobacco audit of retailers along school routes in your community. Invite them to cover your event.

HOW TO CONDUCT AN AUDIT



Day of Event

- Make copies of the audit form. You will need one copy of the form for each retailer along your planned route.
- Gather additional materials and equipment needed for each session in appropriate quantities (clipboards, stickers, route map, pens/pencils).
- Walk your route following the instructions on the audit form.

After Event

- Find a time and place to meet after the walk to debrief.
- Compile final tallies of tobacco retailers and advertisements from individual audit forms.
- Discuss what you saw. Here are some possible discussion questions: What did you learn today? How could these types of advertisements affect youth? Do you see this as an issue? If so, what do you think can be done about it?
- Create a visual display of tobacco retailers and advertisements along the school route. The included example may give you ideas but your youth group can use poster board, tri-fold posters, or anything you want to create the visual display. Be creative!
- Share your findings with local school boards and policy makers.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What if I don't live in an urban environment?

While the activity is best suited for an urban environment, you can certainly lead your youth group on a walking audit of tobacco retailers if you live in other locations. Keep in mind that you may not encounter as many tobacco retailers and/or advertisements.

Q: What should I do if a store owner wants to know what we are doing?

You are only observing advertisements that are visible from outside of the store. If someone questions what you are doing, let them know that your group is working on a project to learn more about advertising in your community. You may consider letting the store owner know what your group is doing when you arrive at the store.

Q: What if I have more than 6 participants?

To ensure the safety of the participating kids, this activity is best suited for groups of 4-6 kids. Larger groups should be divided into subgroups for the walk and each subgroup should audit a route for a different school in your community. The subgroups can then come back together to discuss what they saw as a larger group.

Q: How long will it take to complete the walk?

The total time may vary, but the audit should take 1-2 hours to complete. The debrief should take 1-2 additional hours to complete. It may be more feasible to break the activity up into two sessions on different days.

Q: How do I choose a good route for the activity?

The walking audit is meant to be done during the day so we suggest a route that is safe and easily walkable by a large group. You may consider choosing a route along the designated school walk zones or bus routes, but make sure there are tobacco retailers. The event coordinator should walk the route before the event to ensure that it is suitable.

Q: Do we need to have a digital camera(s) and camcorder for this activity?

Yes, digital or disposable cameras or smartphones with cameras are required for the activity. Photographs will be used to create your final visual display. A camcorder is optional, as you may wish to create a video documenting your activity.

Q: Where can I find more information about POS marketing and advertising?

CounterTobacco.org has a lot of great resources to learn more about tobacco marketing and policy solutions.

References

1. Lavack, A. M. & Toth, G. (2006). Tobacco point-of-purchase promotion: examining tobacco industry documents. *Tobacco Control*, 15(5), 377-84.
2. Pollay, R.W. (2007). More than meets the eye: on the importance of retail cigarette merchandising. *Tobacco Control*, 16(4), 270-4.
3. Pollay, R.W. (1996). The last straw? Cigarette advertising and realized market shares among youths and adults. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(2): 1-16.
4. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), HHS. (2011). Results from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, NSDUH: Summary of National Findings. <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k10NSDUH/tabs/Sect4peTabs10to11.pdf>.

HOW TO CONDUCT AN AUDIT



Ready to lead your youth on a store audit?

Follow the instructions below to be sure to focus on the right things.

You will be leading kids on an **exterior** audit so you'll be looking for branded signs and functional items visible from the exterior of retail stores. Your kids will be auditing any advertisements visible from the exterior of the store – ads on windows, doors, walls, fences as well as any advertisements on the inside of the store that can be clearly seen when standing outside.

Lookout for ➡

Branded Signs

These include the brand insignia, brand imagery, brand font, and brand colors



Branded Functional Items

These are items with a brand name or company logo that serve a functional purpose in addition to advertising the product (like this windshield washing station)



The kids in your group should be on the lookout for advertisements for many different types of tobacco products including:

Cigarettes: Common brands are Camel, Marlboro, and Newport.

Cigars: Common brands are Black & Mild, Swisher, and Phillies.

Cigarillos (little cigars): Common brands are Swisher Sweets and White Owl.

Smokeless Tobacco: This category includes things like chew or snuff. Common brands are Copenhagen, Grizzly, Klondike, and Skoal.

E-cigarettes: Common electronic cigarette brands include Njoy, Blu, Krave, SmokeStik, and White Cloud.

Other Tobacco Products (OTP): This category includes products like Camel or Marlboro snus (spit-free tobacco pouch) and dissolvables like Orbs, Strips, Ariva, or Stonewell. Common brands are Camel and Marlboro. You may also see ads for cigar wrappers, like Johnny Black Cat.

Examples Below

Cigarette



Cigar



Cigarillo



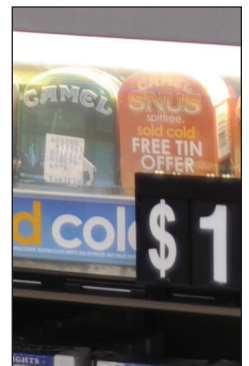
Smokeless



E-cigarette



(OTP)



HOW TO CONDUCT AN AUDIT



Ready to lead your youth on a store audit?

Follow the instructions below to be sure to focus on the right things.

How to spot "Special Price" Ads:

You'll see on the audit form that there is a place for kids to count up the number of special price ads they see. Special price ads refer to advertisements that include words like "special value," "special offer," "discount," "reduced price," "save \$____," "sale price," or "special promotion".

Ads that include words like "low price" or "savings brand" are **not** considered special price ads.

Does This Count as a "Special Price" Ad?



YES

Does This Count as a "Special Price" Ad?



YES

Does This Count as a "Special Price" Ad?



NO

Where should you be looking?

Look for tobacco advertisements on the building exterior (walls, windows, and doors) and in the parking lot. You can count signs posted on the outside of a store window or door and signs that are posted on the inside of store windows facing outward. You can also count signs on the inside of a store that are clearly visible while standing outside (for example, signs hanging from the ceiling of the store). Signs may be in any location on the property, like fences or on gas station fuel pumps, so be sure to look carefully. As your group is looking around, feel free to walk right up to the ads you find to get a closer look. Remember to take photographs of the advertisements.

How should you be counting advertisements?

Have your youth group count the number of advertisements at each retailer. An ad is something portable that could be picked up and moved in one piece. Be sure to keep a few things in mind:

Multiple Ads grouped together

should be counted separately.



Example: Count as 3 Ads

An Ad for more than one product

should only be counted once.



**Example:
Count as 1 Ad**

If there are multiple sections on one ad, count it as one ad.

Do not count Ads where the brand name cannot be identified.

WALKING TOBACCO AUDIT FORM



As you walk your route, be on the lookout for store exteriors with visible tobacco advertisements. Convenience stores, gas stations, pharmacies, and tobacco stores are just a few examples of stores you may come across on your walk. For each store with visible tobacco advertisements fill out the information below as a group and take photographs of the advertisements you see.

Date: _____

Store Name: _____

Address: _____

Step 1: Type of Store (check one)

- ☐ Supermarket & Other Grocery ☐ Convenience Store ☐ Tobacco Store ☐ Gas Station ☐ Newsstand
☐ Beer, Wine, and Liquor Store ☐ Pharmacy or Drug Store ☐ Other _____

Step 2: Ad Placement and Discount Ads

- Are there ads on store doors?..... ☐ No ☐ Yes
Are there ads on building walls?..... ☐ No ☐ Yes
Are there ads on property fences?..... ☐ No ☐ Yes
Are there ads on functional items? e.g. windshield cleaning stations, trash cans, benches. ☐ No ☐ Yes
Are there any ads in other places?..... ☐ No ☐ Yes If Yes, where _____
Are there any "special" price ads?..... ☐ No ☐ Yes
Are there any ads with a multi-pack discount?..... ☐ No ☐ Yes

Step 3: Type of Advertisements

- Are there ads for cigarettes?..... ☐ No ☐ Yes How Many? _____
Are there ads for cigars or cigarillos (little cigars)?..... ☐ No ☐ Yes How Many? _____
Are there ads for smokeless tobacco?..... ☐ No ☐ Yes How Many? _____
Are there ads for other tobacco products (like snus or cigar wrappers)?..... ☐ No ☐ Yes How Many? _____

TOTAL NUMBER OF ADVERTISEMENTS = _____

Step 4: Can you see a school from this store? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Step 5: Is there a place where youth might hang out nearby? (like McDonald's or Starbucks)

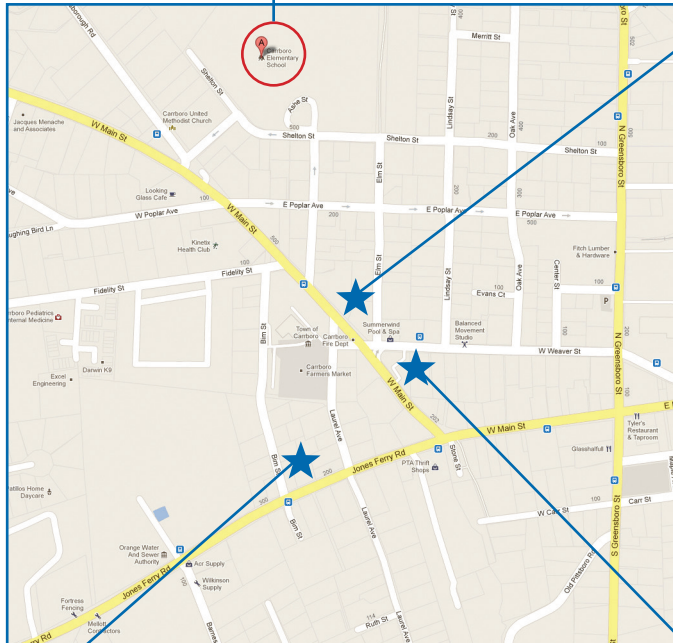
- ☐ No ☐ Yes If Yes, estimate how far away it is: ☐ ½ block away ☐ 1 block away ☐ More than 1 block away



VISUAL DISPLAY OF AUDIT FINDINGS



Elementary School



BP Gas Station



Exxon Gas Station

Citgo Gas Station

