

Mason City Police Department

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: DECEMBER 12, 2018

Contact Person: Sergeant Tiffany Creekmur

Re: I-PLEDGE Tobacco Compliance Checks

The Mason City Police Department partnered with the Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division (ABD) for Tobacco, Alternative Nicotine, and Vapor Product Education and Enforcement. MCPD has taken a pledge to keep these products out of the hands of Mason City youth.

Known as I-PLEDGE, the program is a partnership with Iowa ABD to educate local retailers and to enforce Iowa's tobacco, alternative nicotine, and vapor product laws. Since the program's inception in 2000, the statewide tobacco compliance rate has grown to 91%. By participating in the program, the MCPD has committed to do its part to increase the compliance rate and we accomplished this goal by having a 97% compliance rate by Mason City retailers during the checks, completed on November 28, 2018.

I-PLEDGE places emphasis on retailer training. Clerks who successfully complete an online training course and exam become I-PLEDGE certified. This allows a retail establishment to use an affirmative defense against a civil penalty if the certified clerk makes an illegal sale.

I-PLEDGE's retailer training is a great way for clerks to prepare themselves to refuse illegal tobacco, alternative nicotine, and vapor product sales. The training also helps retailers to ensure they maintain a compliant and responsible establishment.

Officers conducting compliance checks on local licensees use underage customers, under the supervision of law enforcement, to enter the premises and attempt to buy tobacco, alternative nicotine, and vapor products. Clerks who make the illegal sale are cited. Criminal fines for

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**Citizens with information about a crime are encouraged to call
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selling tobacco, alternative nicotine, or vapor products to a minor include a \$100 fine for 1st Offense, \$250 fine for 2nd Offense, and \$500 fine for 3rd or subsequent offense. However, handing out citations is not the intent of the I-PLEDGE program.

By partnering with ABD, we hope to educate clerks and maintain a compliant retail environment in our community. Moreover, we pledge to keep our youth safe from these products. To take the I-PLEDGE training, go to <https://abd.iowa.gov/> to learn more.

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