

2024 California Synar Tobacco Purchase Survey

Introduction:

California's 2024 Synar Tobacco Purchase Survey (STPS) assessed the retailer violation rate for tobacco sales to youth and young adults under 21 years of age using decoys aged 16 to 20 years old.

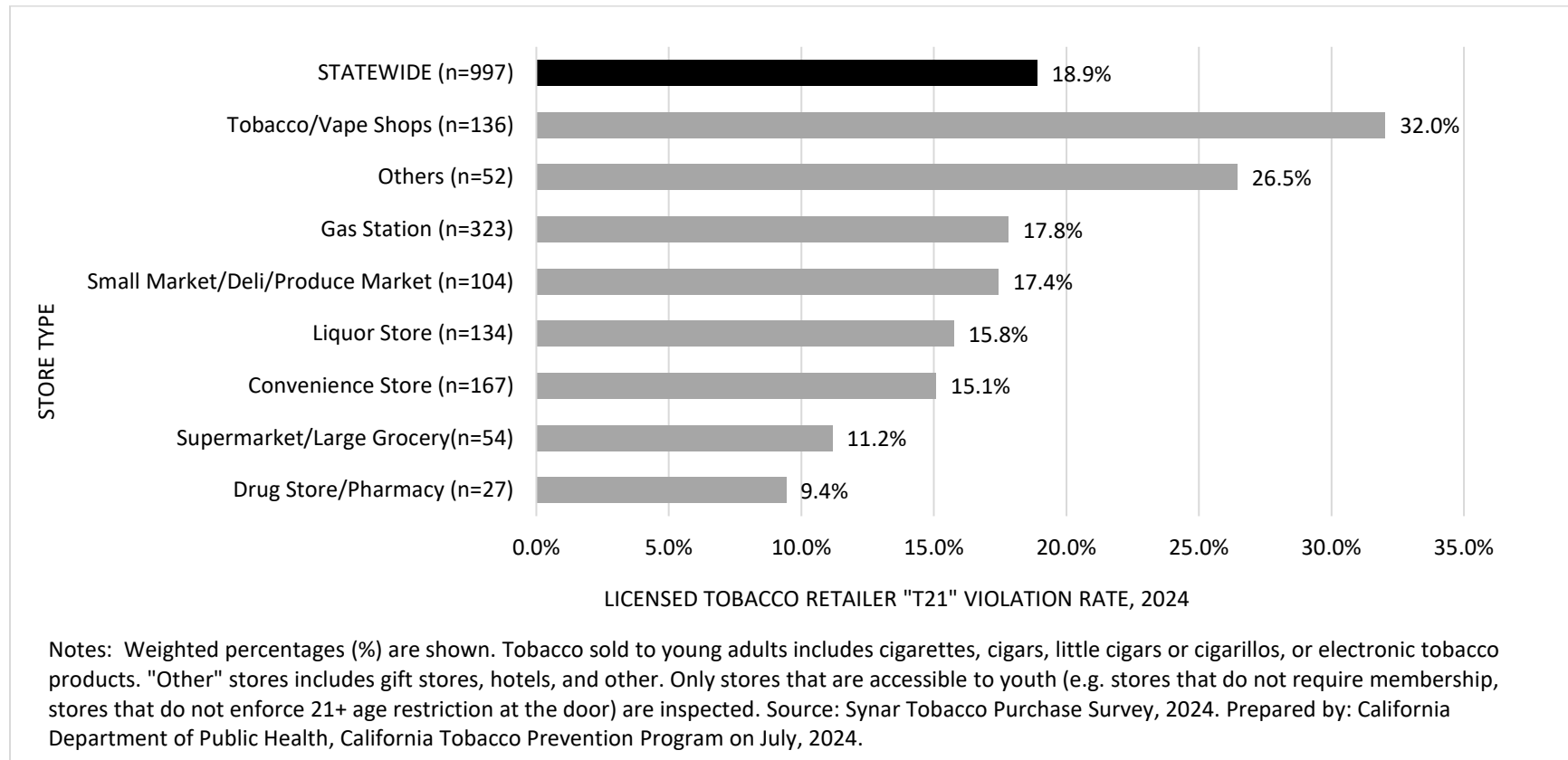
The Federal Synar Regulations require California to conduct a tobacco purchase survey and maintain a compliance rate of no more than 20% plus an allowable margin of error. Failure to maintain compliance with this requirement may result in a reduction of up to 10% of California's Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SABG) funds.

A regionally stratified, random sample of California licensed tobacco retail outlets was sampled from the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration tobacco retailer license list. The 2024 STPS began inspections in February 2024 and concluded in June 2024. 977 outlets were successfully surveyed. Decoys primarily attempted to purchase vaping products (n=588, 59.0%) and cigarettes (n=392, 39.3%). If these products were not available, decoys were able to purchase little cigars/cigarillos, cigars, or smokeless tobacco (n=17, 1.7%).

Results:

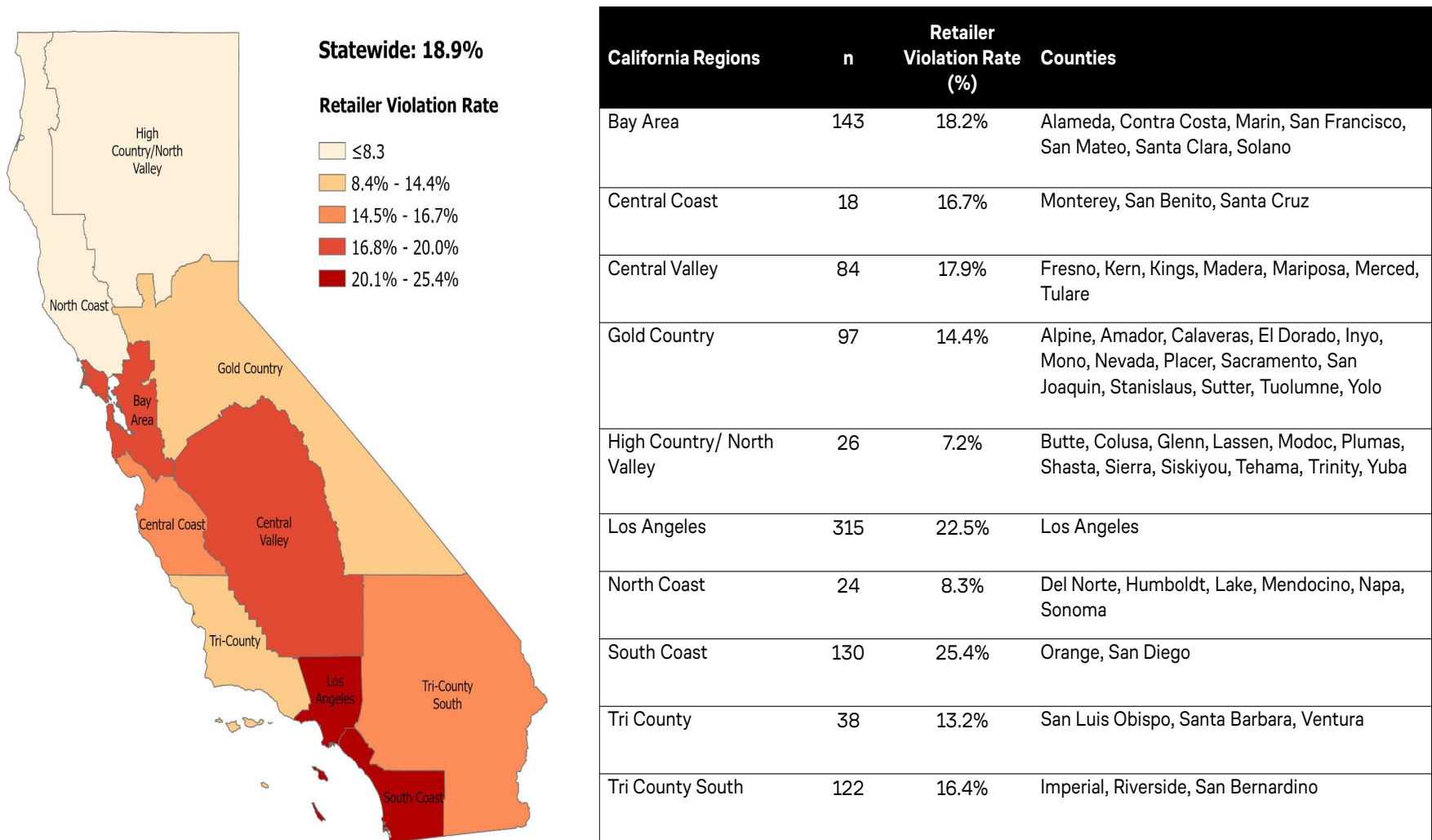
The statewide retailer violation rate was 18.9% (Figure 1). Drug stores/pharmacies and supermarket/large grocery had lowest violation rates (9.4% and 11.2% respectively). Tobacco stores/smoke shops (32.0%), and other stores, like hotels, discount stores, restaurants (26.5%) had higher violation rates than the statewide average. The 2024 retailer violation rate of 18.9% is lower than the violation rate in 2023 (21.9%).

Figure 1. Retailer Violation Rate (%) by Store Type, 2024 Synar Tobacco Purchase Survey



Categorizing the retailer violation rate by region, it was found that South Coast (25.4%) and Los Angeles (22.5%) had the highest violation rate compared to other regions (Figure 2). High Country/North Valley region has the lowest retailer violation rate (7.2%).

Figure 2. Retailer Violation Rate (%) by Region, 2024 Synar Tobacco Purchase Survey

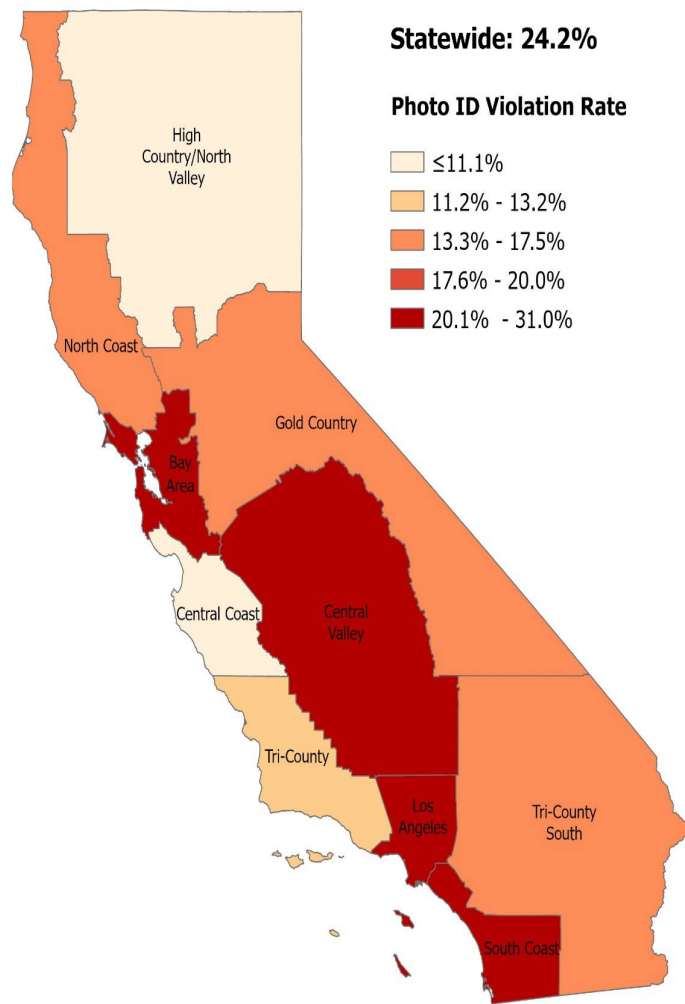


Notes: Weighted percentages (%) are shown.

Source: Synar Tobacco Purchase Survey, 2024. Prepared by: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Prevention Program on July 2024.

The US Food and Drug Administration requires retail outlets to check ID of anyone under the age of 30. The STPS found that 24.2% of retail outlets did not follow this requirement. Among the retail outlets that did not check ID at the time of purchase, the retailer violation rate for underage sales was 70.6%. This is significantly higher than the 2.4% retailer violation rate for underage sales among retail outlets that did check ID at the time of purchase. Photo ID verification violation was highest in Central Valley and Bay Area (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Photo ID Verification Violation Rate (%) by Region, 2024 Synar Tobacco Purchase Survey



California Regions	n	Photo ID Violation Rate (%)	Counties
Bay Area	143	29.4%	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano
Central Coast	18	11.1%	Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz
Central Valley	84	31.0%	Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Tulare
Gold Country	97	17.5%	Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Inyo, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tuolumne, Yolo
High Country/ North Valley	26	10.8%	Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity, Yuba
Los Angeles	315	27.9%	Los Angeles
North Coast	24	16.7%	Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, Napa, Sonoma
South Coast	130	27.7%	Orange, San Diego
Tri County	38	13.2%	San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura
Tri County South	122	17.2%	Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino

Notes: Weighted percentages (%) are shown.

Source: Synar Tobacco Purchase Survey, 2024. Prepared by: California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Prevention Program on July 2024.