

Self-restriction for Addiction Free Engagement (SAFE) Act

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

SECTION 1. PURPOSE AND INTENT

The people of Washington State recognize the significant public health, social, and economic harms associated with addictive substances and behaviors. This initiative seeks to:

- Standardize and enforce age verification for all restricted purchases and access.
 - Empower individuals to self-restrict access to addictive products or services through an optional designation on their state-issued ID.
 - Ensure equity, privacy, and non-discrimination for persons who have difficulty obtaining standard IDs.
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SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

As used in this Act:

1. “Age-Restricted Product or Service” means any product or service for which state or federal law imposes a minimum legal age for purchase, possession, or participation, including but not limited to:
 - Alcoholic beverages;
 - Tobacco and nicotine products;

- Gambling and gaming establishments;
 - Pornographic materials or establishments.
2. “Universal Age Verification” means the requirement that all individuals, regardless of age or appearance, present valid photo identification at the point of sale or entry when purchasing or accessing any age-restricted product or service.
 3. “Voluntary Access Restriction Designation (VARD)” means a designation chosen by a person, which is noted on their government-issued identification (or qualifying specialty or eligibility ID) indicating that the individual has elected to block themselves from purchasing or accessing specified age-restricted products or services.
 4. “Specialty or Eligibility Identification” means any of the following:
 - Military identification;
 - Tribal identification;
 - Consular identification;
 - Foreign passport;
 - A state Eligibility ID Card issued under this Act for residents who lack other acceptable IDs.
 5. “Community Verification” means verification by a recognized community organization, nonprofit, shelter, religious institution, or similarly recognized entity, which attests in writing under oath or affidavit to an individual’s identity and age, as an alternative when standard or specialty IDs are unavailable.
 6. “Recognized Community Organization” means an entity established in the community which serves vulnerable populations and is registered with or certified by state or local authorities for verification purposes.

7. “Grace Period” means the initial 90 calendar days after the effective date of this Act, during which retail establishments are expected to comply but will not be subject to fines or penalties for noncompliance.
8. “Discrimination” means any adverse treatment or denial of rights or services because of race, color, national origin, immigration status, sex, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, housing status (including homelessness), or any similar protected status under Washington State law.

SECTION 3. UNIVERSAL AGE VERIFICATION REQUIRED

1. Implementation & Grace Period

- This requirement shall become effective on the effective date of this Act.
- For the first ninety (90) days (the Grace Period), retail establishments and other providers of age-restricted products/services are expected to implement universal id verification but shall not incur fines or civil penalties for non-compliance. After the Grace Period ends, penalties apply.

2. Requirement

- All vendors, retailers, or establishments that sell or provide access to age-restricted products or services shall require valid photo identification from every person, regardless of age or appearance, at the point of sale or entry.
 - Acceptable IDs shall include standard IDs, specialty IDs, or eligibility IDs, and community verification when no acceptable ID is held.
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SECTION 4. VOLUNTARY ACCESS RESTRICTION DESIGNATION (VARD)

1. Any Washington State resident may elect to include one or more VARDs on their government-issued standard or eligibility ID.
2. The state shall provide the option to add, update, or remove VARDs at the time of ID issuance, renewal, or via a formal request to the Department of Licensing, with changes taking effect no later than 10 business days after processing.
3. Retailers and establishments must treat VARDs as legally binding; no sale or entry may occur if it conflicts with a VARD.

SECTION 5. SPECIALTY / ELIGIBILITY ID CARDS & COMMUNITY VERIFICATION

1. The State shall issue, at minimal or no cost, a State Eligibility ID Card under this Act to any resident who lacks a standard or specialty ID. The requirements for issuance shall be minimal and may include alternative documentation or community verification.
2. The State shall approve recognized community organizations to provide community verification affidavits attesting to identity and age for persons without adequate photo ID. Those affidavits shall be accepted in lieu of photo ID under this Act.

SECTION 6. PRIVACY AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROTECTIONS

1. No person shall be denied service, opportunity, or rights under this Act based on their race, color, national origin, immigration status, sex, sexual orientation, religion, housing status, socioeconomic status, or homelessness.

2. All personal information collected under this Act—including ID verification data, VARD status, specialty/eligibility ID, or community verification affidavits—shall be handled in accordance with applicable privacy laws. Such information:

- May be used only for verifying identity, age, or implementing VARDs;
- Must be kept confidential;
- Shall *not* be used for unrelated law enforcement, surveillance, commercial profiling, or discriminatory purposes;
- Individuals have the right to see what information is held about them, correct it, and request deletion where appropriate (consistent with legal retention for public safety or enforcement).

SECTION 7. ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

1. The Department of Licensing and relevant regulatory agencies will establish rules for compliance, inspections, and enforcement after the Grace Period.

2. Retail establishments or vendors failing to comply after the Grace Period:

- May face fines (specified) and potential license or permit suspension, in accordance with agency rules.
- Penalties shall be proportionate; consideration must be given to scale of business, resources, and efforts made to comply.

SECTION 8. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder shall continue in full.

SECTION 9. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act shall take effect on January 1 of the year following its passage and the Grace Period of 90 days shall begin on that date.