

Leading the change



*Irish
Cigarette
Machine
Operators
Association*



ICMOA

Founded in 1982, the Irish Cigarette Machine Operators Association (ICMOA) is a body that represents a core group of primarily family-run businesses that provide vending machines to licensed premises in the Republic of Ireland. The ICMOA has some 100 member companies whose sole or primary source of income is the cigarette vending business.

Machine operators are responsible traders and businesspeople, who give back to the community through participation in economic life, sponsorship of local initiatives, and employment of local staff.

The ICMOA would like to stress that vending machines are an important part of the legitimate tobacco industry. The pubs, clubs and shops where these machines operate are the cornerstone of the community, points of social contact and vital contributors to the quality of life of people for some of whom this may be their main social outlet. The Association also stresses that sales lost through restrictions on vending machines are gained by illegal operators.

Mission Statement

The ICMOA is committed to the legitimate sale of cigarettes and tobacco products to adult consumers above the legal age. The ICMOA's policy is to ensure that cigarette vending machine operators, both members and non-members, take all reasonable and necessary precautions to protect their machines from unsupervised access by children and young persons.

Legislation

Recent legislation has raised the legal age for the sale of cigarettes and tobacco products to people 18 years of age and over.

The Minister for Health and Children has introduced two amendments to the Tobacco (Health Promotion and Protection) Act, 1988. The first has raised the legal minimum age for the purchase of tobacco products to 18 years of age, while the second amendment increases the penalties to €2,000 for breaches of the Act in relation to selling tobacco products to people under the age of 18 years.

The Minister is also looking to tighten the control of vending machines as well as bring in a registration system whereby every outlet/premises that sells tobacco products will have to be registered.

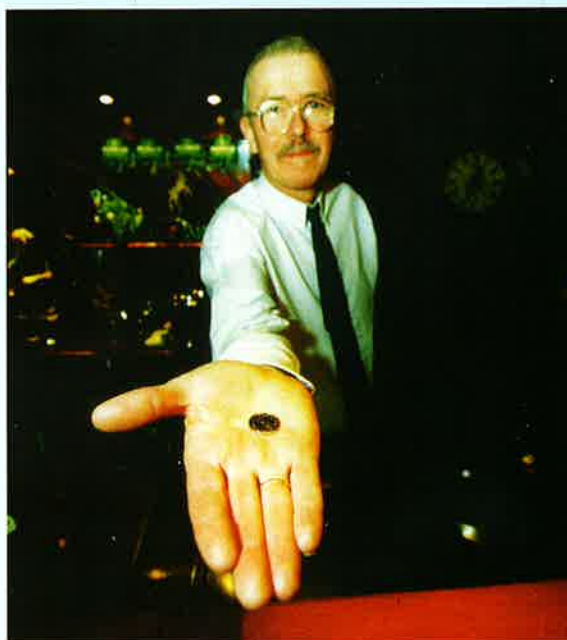
The ICMOA welcomes the Government's initiatives to prevent tobacco sales to minors. The Association is continuing to consult both members and other trade groups on issues related to the proposed legislation, and it is endeavouring to do whatever possible to control the sales of tobacco products as well as protect children, machine operators and merchants from illegal sales.



Token System

Since the Association was founded, it has worked for years to make sure tobacco is available for purchase only to those of legal age in pubs, clubs, nightclubs and hotels. After consulting a core group of family-run businesses who provide vending machines to licensed premises around the country, the ICMOA has come up with a solution.

In October 2000 the Association unveiled a unique vending system that works on a token-only basis.



The system is very simple and straightforward. The customer first obtains a token from a member of staff on the premises who can verify the age of the buyer. If the customer cannot produce proper age verification, then the staff member must refuse service under the law. The buyer then inserts the token into the machine in order to enable it. Once enabled, the machine will operate as normal, accepting the necessary coinage to purchase the product.



After the sale is finished the machine is automatically disabled until a token is inserted for the next purchase.



The ICMOA is the first trade association in the world to implement such a system. The minting and supply of the tokens will be controlled by the ICMOA. The tokens will be made by the oldest mint in the world, Pobjoy, which has been in operation since 1398. ICMOA members will cover the cost of converting machines to the token system.

It must also be emphasised that even with the new token system, legal responsibility has not shifted - it remains that of the machine owner and the proprietor of the premises where the machine is located. However, the use of a token-controlled vending machine provides greater protection for both parties as the purchaser cannot obtain a product without first approaching a member of staff.



The Euro

Retailers and businesses should start 'frontloading' as soon as they can. Frontloading is where the business starts stocking up on Euro currency as soon as possible. Euro coins will be available from the banks around the beginning of October to late November, and Euro notes in the latter part of December. Businesses will not be charged for any currency taken out during these periods and their accounts will not be debited before January 2, 2002. Frontloading will help to get the currency out from the Central Bank to the banks and further distributed to businesses and retailers.

By February 9, 2002, the end of the dual circulation period, all national currencies will be withdrawn from use. For this reason, the time of the Euro conversion is the ideal time for the introduction of the token-based vending system and the simultaneous solution to combat sales of cigarettes to minors.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does the token system work?

The customer gets a token from a member of staff. Once the token is inserted into the machine it activates the machine and it will then operate as normal. The customer then inserts the required amount for their purchase. Once the product is dispensed the token is retained and the machine is disabled until the next token is inserted.

Where will the tokens come from?

From the machine operators. Proprietors of outlets/premises will not be able to take the tokens out of the machines. However, machine operators will supply a float of tokens to each outlet to ensure that people who are entitled to purchase cigarettes and tobacco products are able to do so.

Who pays for the tokens?

There is no payment. Owners of the site/premises will not have to pay for tokens. They will be supplied and paid for by the machine operators.

Does the outlet have to sell the tokens?

No, the tokens have no monetary value. Their only purpose is to enable the machine for a purchase.

Can the token be easily copied?

No, absolutely not. The token is manufactured to the same standard as a euro 50 cent coin.

What if the customer cannot provide valid age verification?

Stick to the simple rule:
"If in doubt, don't give it out"

"The Vintners Federation of Ireland fully supports this initiative taken by the ICMOA. We encourage any scheme whereby the sale of tobacco to minors is prohibited and give this system our full backing".

Tadg O'Sullivan, CEO, Vintners Federation of Ireland.

"As the representative body of licensed premises to the greater Dublin area, the LVA supports the introduction of the ICMOA's token based cigarette vending machine and any initiatives where purchasers are required to provide legal age verification such as a driving licence, passport or national identification card."

Frank Fell, Chief Executive, Licensed Vintners Association

"This token based vending system for cigarettes is welcomed by the members of the Irish Hotels Federation. We are very eager to prevent the sale of cigarettes to persons under the legal age, and give our full support to this system."

John Power, CEO, Irish Hotels Federation.

**This initiative is supported
by the Irish Tobacco Manufacturer's
Advisory Committee**

Irish Cigarette Machine Operators Association
5 Oak Way, Green Park, Dublin 22
Phone: 00 353 1 459 4460
Fax: 00 353 1 628 0196
www.icmoa.net