

Extra Warning

Did you ever notice packs of cigarettes and chewing tobacco have only a microscopic warning and no list of ingredients? Here's your chance to design your own creative and shocking messages that tell the truth about tobacco products.

AGE GROUP: middle school, high school

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 3 - 6 recommended per store (depending on store size) and 1 adult

TIME: 6 - 8 weeks recommended

RESOURCES: stickers, markers or a printer

COST: \$30 - \$60

Big Tobacco doesn't want us to know about the thousands of chemicals in tobacco products or all the diseases they cause. The current warning labels are so small, it's not a surprise people miss or ignore them. It's time to create a warning that does the product justice.

"We all know that Big Tobacco will not tell the public how harmful their product is, so we just do what they won't." Vicki Hebert, 20, Dover, NH.

4-6 weeks before the event:

- Do some research about what's in tobacco products and what diseases the different ingredients cause. (See "They put WHAT in a cigarette?!")
- Decide what you want the public to know and design a sticker to get your message out.
- Be creative and design a warning that will shock and engage people!
- Make sure you don't just copy the Surgeon General's warning that is already on the pack.
- If you are producing your labels by hand, grab pens and markers and start writing.
- If you are printing your labels, create them on a computer and laser print them out at home or school on sticker labels. If you have the resources, you can have stickers professionally printed.

3-5 weeks before the event:

- Now that you have developed your sticker, print some samples.
- Make a list of all the stores that sell cigarettes in your community. Get a few of your friends together and visit some of the stores. Tell them who you are, what you want to do and, of course, why you're doing it.
- Once you have a list of all the stores that are willing to help you, call and set dates (1-3 weeks before KBD) and times to go back and put on the stickers. Be sure to ask the store approximately how many packs they have so you know how many stickers you will need.
- Roadblock! If the stores aren't willing to let you put stickers on the tobacco product packages, ask if they will let you post larger warning signs next to tobacco product displays, on the counter or on tobacco advertisements at the store.

2-4 weeks before the event:

- Now that you have developed your sticker and know how many you need, start the presses! Print or write out your labels.

1-3 weeks before the event:

- You should visit all of the stores that you will be working with and get started applying the stickers so customers will see labels on packs leading up to Kick Butts Day. You will want to work in a timely and orderly fashion, keeping things clean and not disrupting customers or staff.
- The fine print: when putting the stickers on, be sure not to cover the logo, the Surgeon General's warning or the tax stamp. Try to place all of the stickers in the same place on all the packs to give it a clean look.
- Call the paparazzi. Start developing media materials and contact reporters. See the media section for more information and template materials.

Event day:

- It's best to do the labeling event on Kick Butts Day. Don't forget to let the media know about this opportunity to feature a photo or footage of your group in action.

Other ideas:

- Include a letter writing campaign to your members of Congress as part of your event. Let them know you want stronger warning labels on tobacco products, and that they should give the U.S. Food and Drug Administration the authority to regulate tobacco products and require stronger warning labels. Visit tobaccofreekids.org for more information about FDA regulation of tobacco, and check our KBD Follow-Up section for contact info for your members of Congress.

Event follow-up:

- Send thank you letters and/or certificates to all participating stores.
- This project can be done just for KBD or you can continue it through the year, so think about organizing it again and contact the stores to see when they would be available.