

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2022 RECONVENED SESSION

CHAPTER 779

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 58.1-1021.01, 58.1-1021.02, 58.1-1021.04, 58.1-1021.04:1, and 58.1-1021.04:2 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 58.1-1021.02:2, relating to tobacco products tax; remote retail sales.

[H 1199]

Approved April 27, 2022

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 58.1-1021.01, 58.1-1021.02, 58.1-1021.04, 58.1-1021.04:1, and 58.1-1021.04:2 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 58.1-1021.02:2 as follows:

§ 58.1-1021.01. Definitions.

As used in this article, unless the context clearly shows otherwise, the term or phrase requires a different meaning:

"Actual cost" means the actual price paid by a remote retail seller for each individual stock keeping unit or SKU.

"Alternative nicotine product" means any noncombustible product containing nicotine that is not made of tobacco and is intended for human consumption, whether chewed, absorbed, dissolved, or ingested by any other means. "Alternative nicotine product" does not include any nicotine vapor product or any product regulated as a drug or device by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under Chapter V (21 U.S.C. § 351 et seq.) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

"Cigar" means any roll of tobacco wrapped in leaf tobacco or in any substance containing tobacco, other than any roll of tobacco that is a cigarette as such term is defined in § 58.1-1000.

"Consumer" means the person who is the end or final user of tobacco products.

"Distributor" means (i) any person engaged in the business of selling tobacco products in the Commonwealth who brings, or causes to be brought, into the Commonwealth from outside the Commonwealth any tobacco products for sale; (ii) any person who makes, manufactures, fabricates, or stores tobacco products in the Commonwealth for sale in the Commonwealth; (iii) any person engaged in the business of selling tobacco products outside the Commonwealth who ships or transports tobacco products to any person in the business of selling tobacco products in the Commonwealth; or (iv) any retail dealer in possession of untaxed tobacco products in the Commonwealth.

"Heated tobacco product" means a product containing tobacco that produces an inhalable aerosol (i) by heating the tobacco by means of an electronic device without combustion of the tobacco or (ii) by heat generated from a combustion source that only or primarily heats rather than burns the tobacco.

"Liquid nicotine" means a liquid or other substance containing nicotine in any concentration that is sold, marketed, or intended for use in a nicotine vapor product.

"Loose leaf tobacco" means any leaf tobacco that is not intended to be smoked, but shall not include moist snuff. Loose leaf tobacco weight unit categories shall be as follows:

1. "Loose leaf tobacco half pound-unit" means a consumer sized unit, pouch, or package containing at least 4 ounces but not more than 8 ounces of loose leaf tobacco, by net weight, produced by the manufacturer to be sold to consumers as a single unit and not produced to be divided or sold separately and containing one individual package.

2. "Loose leaf tobacco pound-unit" means a consumer sized unit, pouch, or package containing more than 8 ounces of loose leaf tobacco, by net weight, produced by the manufacturer to be sold to consumers as a single unit and not produced to be divided or sold separately and containing one individual package.

3. "Loose leaf tobacco single-unit" means a consumer sized unit, pouch, or package containing less than 4 ounces of loose leaf tobacco, by net weight, produced by the manufacturer to be sold to consumers as a single unit and not produced to be divided or sold separately and containing one individual package.

"Manufacturer" means a person who manufactures or produces tobacco products and sells tobacco products to a distributor.

"Manufacturer's representative" means a person employed by a manufacturer to sell or distribute the manufacturer's tobacco products.

"Manufacturer's sales price" means the actual price for which a manufacturer, manufacturer's representative, or any other person sells tobacco products to an unaffiliated distributor.

"Moist snuff" means a tobacco product consisting of finely cut, ground, or powdered tobacco that is not intended to be smoked but shall not include any finely cut, ground, or powdered tobacco that is intended to be placed in the nasal cavity.

"Person" means any individual, corporation, partnership, association, company, business, trust, joint venture, or other legal entity.

"Nicotine vapor product" means any noncombustible product containing nicotine that employs a heating element, power source, electronic circuit, or other electronic, chemical, or mechanical means, regardless of shape or size, that can be used to produce vapor from nicotine in a solution or other form. "Nicotine vapor product" includes any electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, or similar product or device and any cartridge or other container of nicotine in a solution or other form that is intended to be used with or in an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, or similar product or device. "Nicotine vapor product" does not include any product regulated by the FDA under Chapter V (21 U.S.C. § 351 et seq.) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

"Person" means any individual, corporation, partnership, association, company, business, trust, joint venture, or other legal entity.

"Pipe tobacco" means any tobacco that, because of its appearance, type, packaging, or labeling, is suitable for use and likely to be offered or purchased by consumers as tobacco to be smoked in a pipe.

"Remote retail sale" means any sale of cigars or pipe tobacco to a consumer in the Commonwealth when (i) the consumer submits the order for the sale by means of a telephone or other method of voice transmission, the mail, or the Internet or other online service, or the seller is otherwise not in the physical presence of the consumer when the request for the purchase or order is made, or (ii) the cigars or pipe tobacco are delivered to the consumer by common carrier, private delivery service, or other method of remote delivery, or the seller is not in the physical presence of the consumer when the buyer obtains possession of the cigars or pipe tobacco.

"Remote retail seller" means a person located within or outside of this state that makes remote retail sales of cigars or pipe tobacco.

"Retail dealer" means every person who sells or offers for sale any tobacco product to consumers at retail in a transaction other than a remote retail sale.

"SKU" means an individual stock keeping unit identifier used for tracking inventory.

"Tobacco product" or "tobacco products" means (i) "cigar" as defined in § 5702(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, and as such section may be amended; (ii) "smokeless tobacco" as defined in § 5702(m) of the Internal Revenue Code, and as such section may be amended; or (iii) "pipe tobacco" as defined in § 5702(n) of the Internal Revenue Code, and as such section may be amended. "Tobacco products" shall also include loose leaf tobacco.

§ 58.1-1021.02. Tax on tobacco products.

A. In addition to all other taxes now imposed by law, there is hereby imposed a tax upon the privilege of selling or dealing in tobacco products in the Commonwealth by any person engaged in business as a distributor or remote retail seller thereof, at the following rates:

1. Upon each package of moist snuff, at the rate of \$0.18 per ounce with a proportionate tax at the same rate on all fractional parts of an ounce. The tax shall be computed based on the net weight as listed by the manufacturer on the package in accordance with federal law.

2. For purposes of the tax under this article, loose leaf tobacco shall be classified as loose leaf tobacco single-units, loose leaf tobacco half pound-units, and loose leaf tobacco pound-units. Such tax shall be imposed on the distributor for loose leaf tobacco as follows:

a. \$0.21 for each loose leaf tobacco single-unit;

b. \$0.40 for each loose leaf tobacco half pound-unit;

c. \$0.70 for each loose leaf tobacco pound-unit; and

d. For any other unit, pouch, or package of loose leaf tobacco, the tax shall be by net weight and shall be \$0.21 per unit, pouch, or package plus \$0.21 for each increment of 4 ounces or portion thereof that the loose leaf tobacco exceeds 16 ounces.

The tax for each unit, pouch, or package of loose leaf tobacco shall be in accordance with the provisions of subdivisions a. through d. only and regardless of sales price.

3. Upon tobacco products other than moist snuff or loose leaf tobacco, at the rate of 10 percent of the manufacturer's sales price of such tobacco products.

Upon cigars and pipe tobacco products sold by remote retail sellers, the tax rates delineated in this subdivision shall apply to:

(a) The actual cost; or

(b) If the actual cost is not available, the average of the actual cost over the 12 calendar months before January 1 of the year in which the sale occurs.

Such tax shall be imposed at the time the remote retail seller located within or outside the Commonwealth makes a remote retail sale to a consumer within the Commonwealth. It is the intent and purpose of this subdivision that the remote retail seller be liable for the tax. It is further the intent and purpose of this article to impose the tax once, and only once on all tobacco products, including cigars and pipe tobacco sold in the Commonwealth.

Such tax shall be imposed at the time the distributor (i) brings or causes to be brought into the Commonwealth from outside the Commonwealth tobacco products for sale on tobacco products (i) at

the time of retail sale by a retail dealer or distributor; (ii) at the time the distributor makes, manufactures, or fabricates tobacco products in the Commonwealth for sale in the Commonwealth; or (iii) at the time the distributor ships or transports tobacco products to retailers in the Commonwealth to be sold by those retailers. It is the intent and purpose of this article that the distributor who first possesses the tobacco product subject to this tax in the Commonwealth shall be the distributor liable for the tax. It is further the intent and purpose of this article to impose the tax once, and only once on all tobacco products for sale in the Commonwealth.

B. No tax shall be imposed pursuant to this section upon tobacco products not within the taxing power of the Commonwealth under the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution.

C. A distributor that calculates and pays the tax pursuant to subdivision A 1 or A 2 in good faith reliance on the net weight listed by the manufacturer on the package or on the manufacturer's invoice shall not be liable for additional tax, or for interest or penalties, solely by reason of a subsequent determination that such weight information was incorrect.

§ 58.1-1021.02:2. Records to be kept and reports by remote retail sellers of cigars and pipe tobacco.

Each remote retail seller that makes a remote retail sale of cigars and pipe tobacco products to any consumer located in the Commonwealth shall keep all records of remote retail sales as follows: (i) each remote retail seller that ships tobacco products to any consumer located in the Commonwealth shall file a report with the Department no later than the twentieth of each month identifying the total quantity, date, and dollar value of all such remote retail sale shipments made during the preceding month and (ii) every licensed remote retail seller outside the Commonwealth that is not a licensed distributor shall in a like manner file a return showing the quantity and actual cost of each cigar or pipe tobacco product shipped or transported to consumers in the Commonwealth during the preceding calendar month. The return shall be made on forms furnished or prescribed by the Department and shall contain or be accompanied by such further information as the Department shall require. The remote retail seller, at the time of filing the return, shall pay to the Department the tax imposed under subsection A of § 58.1-1021.02 for each such package sold in remote retail sales into the Commonwealth in the preceding month on which tax is due. The Department may allow such reports to be filed electronically.

§ 58.1-1021.04. Failure to file return; fraudulent return; penalties; interest; overpayment of tax.

A. When any distributor or remote retail seller fails to make any return or pay the full amount of the tax required by this article, there shall be imposed a specific penalty to be added to the tax in the amount of five percent if the failure is for not more than one month, with an additional two percent for each additional month, or fraction thereof, during which the failure continues, not to exceed 20 percent in the aggregate. In no case, however, shall the penalty be less than \$10 and such minimum penalty shall apply whether or not any tax is due for the period for which such return was required. If such failure is due to providential or other good cause shown to the satisfaction of the Tax Commissioner, such return with or without remittance may be accepted exclusive of penalties. In the case of a false or fraudulent return where willful intent exists to defraud the Commonwealth of any tax due under this article, or in the case of a willful failure to file a return with the intent to defraud the Commonwealth of any such tax, a specific penalty of 50 percent of the amount of the proper tax shall be assessed. All penalties and interest imposed by this article shall be payable by the distributor or remote retail seller and collectible by the Department in the same manner as if they were a part of the tax imposed.

B. It shall be prima facie evidence of intent to defraud the Commonwealth of any tax due under this article when any distributor or remote retail seller reports his purchases at 50 percent or less of the actual amount.

C. Interest at a rate determined in accordance with § 58.1-15 shall accrue on the tax until the same is paid.

No deficiency, interest or penalty shall be assessed for any month after the expiration of three years from the date set for the filing of the return for such month, except in cases of fraud, or where no return has been filed for such month.

D. If the Tax Commissioner determines that the amount paid the Commonwealth under this article in regard to any monthly return was greater than the amount of tax due the Commonwealth, the excess may be taken as a credit by the distributor or remote retail seller against a subsequent month's tax imposed under this article. However, if such distributor or remote retail seller requests a refund, such excess shall be refunded to the distributor or remote retail seller within 45 days of the request. The refund shall include interest at the rate provided in § 58.1-15. Interest on such refunds shall accrue from the due date of the return to which such excess is attributable to or the date such excess was paid to the Department, whichever is later, and shall end on a date determined by the Department preceding the date of the refund check by not more than seven days.

§ 58.1-1021.04:1. Distributor's or remote retail seller's license; penalty.

A. No person shall engage in the business of selling or dealing in tobacco products as a distributor in the Commonwealth without first having received a separate license from the Department for each location or place of business. Each application for a distributor's license shall be accompanied by a fee to be prescribed by the Department. Every application for such license shall be made on a form

prescribed by the Department and the following information shall be provided on the application:

1. The name and address of the applicant. If the applicant is a firm, partnership or association, the name and address of each of its members shall be provided. If the applicant is a corporation, the name and address of each of its principal officers shall be provided;
2. The address of the applicant's principal place of business;
3. The place or places where the business to be licensed is to be conducted; and
4. Such other information as the Department may require for the purpose of the administration of this article.

B. A person outside the Commonwealth who ships or transports tobacco products to retailers in the Commonwealth, to be sold by those retailers, may make application for license as a distributor, be granted such a license by the Department, and thereafter be subject to all the provisions of this article. Once a license is granted pursuant to this section, such person shall be entitled to act as a licensed distributor and, unless such person maintains a registered agent pursuant to Chapter 9, 10, 12 or 14 of Title 13.1 or Chapter 2.1 or 2.2 of Title 50, shall be deemed to have appointed the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission as the person's agent for the purpose of service of process relating to any matter or issue involving the person and arising under the provisions of this article.

The Department shall conduct a background investigation, to include a Virginia Criminal History Records search, and fingerprints of the applicant, or the responsible principals, managers, and other persons engaged in handling tobacco products at the licensable locations, that shall be submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation if the Department deems a National Criminal Records search necessary, on applicants for licensure as tobacco products distributors. The Department may refuse to issue a distributor's license or may suspend, revoke or refuse to renew a distributor's license issued to any person, partnership, corporation, limited liability company or business trust, if it determines that the principals, managers, and other persons engaged in handling tobacco products at the licensable location of the applicant have been (i) found guilty of any fraud or misrepresentation in any connection; (ii) convicted of robbery, extortion, burglary, larceny, embezzlement, fraudulent conversion, gambling, perjury, bribery, treason, or racketeering; or (iii) convicted of a felony. Anyone who knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals or misrepresents a material fact or knowingly and willfully makes a false, fictitious or fraudulent statement or representation in any application for a distributor's license to the Department, shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The Department may establish an application or renewal fee not to exceed \$750 to be retained by the Department to be applied to the administrative and other costs of processing distributor's license applications, conducting background investigations and issuing distributor's licenses. Any amount collected pursuant to this section in excess of such costs as of June 30 in even numbered years shall be reported to the State Treasurer and deposited into the state treasury.

C. No person inside or outside the Commonwealth shall make a remote retail sale of cigars or pipe tobacco to consumers in the Commonwealth without (i) completing an application for and being granted a license as a remote retail seller; (ii) determining whether economic nexus activity thresholds have been met to register for a dealer's certificate under § 58.1-613; (iii) if economic nexus thresholds are met, collecting and remitting the excise tax pursuant to subsection A of § 58.1-1021.02; (iv) providing for age verification through an independent, third-party age verification service that compares information available from a commercially available database, or aggregate of databases, that is regularly used by government agencies and businesses for the purpose of age and identity verification to the personal information entered by the individual during the ordering process that establishes that the individual is of age; and (v) if economic nexus thresholds are met, and excise tax is being remitted using the actual cost list method to calculate the excise tax, providing the remote retail seller's certified actual cost list to the Department for each SKU to be offered for remote retail sale in the subsequent calendar year. The actual cost list shall be updated quarterly as new SKUs are added to a remote retail seller's inventory. New SKUs will be added using the actual cost first paid for the SKU.

D. Upon receipt of an application in proper form and payment of the required license fee, the Department shall, unless otherwise provided by this article, issue to the applicant a license, which shall permit the licensee to engage in business as a distributor at the place of business shown on the license. Each license, or a copy thereof, shall be prominently displayed on the premises covered by the license. No license shall be transferable to any other person. Distributor's licenses issued pursuant to this section shall be valid for a period of three years from the date of issue unless revoked by the Department in the manner provided herein. The Department may at any time revoke the license issued to any distributor who is found guilty of violating or noncompliance with any of the provisions of this chapter, or any of the rules of the Department adopted and promulgated under authority of this chapter.

~~D.~~ E. The Department shall compile and maintain a current list of licensed distributors *and remote retail sellers*. The list shall be updated on a monthly basis, and published on the Department's official Internet website, available to any interested party.

§ 58.1-1021.04:2. Certain records required of distributor; access to premises.

A. Each distributor *or remote retail seller* shall keep in each licensed place of business complete and accurate records for that place of business, including itemized invoices of: (i) tobacco products held,

purchased, manufactured, brought in or caused to be brought in from outside the Commonwealth, or shipped or transported to retailers in the Commonwealth; (ii) all sales of tobacco products made; (iii) all tobacco products, *including cigars and pipe tobacco*, transferred to other retail outlets owned or controlled by that licensed distributor *or remote retail seller*; and (iv) any records required by the Department.

All books, records and other papers and documents required by this subsection to be kept shall be preserved, in a form prescribed by the Department, for a period of at least three years after the date of the documents or the date of the entries thereof appearing in the records, unless the Department authorizes, in writing, their destruction or disposal at an earlier date.

B. At any time during usual business hours, duly authorized agents or employees of the Department may enter any place of business of a distributor and inspect the premises, the records required to be kept under this article and the tobacco products contained therein, to determine whether all the provisions of this article are being complied with fully. Refusal to permit such inspection by a duly authorized agent or employee of the Department shall be grounds for revocation of the license.

C. Each person who sells tobacco products to persons other than an ultimate consumer shall render with each sale itemized invoices showing the seller's name and address, the purchaser's name and address, the date of sale and all prices. Such person shall preserve legible copies of all such invoices for three years after the date of sale.

D. Each distributor *or remote retail seller* shall procure itemized invoices of all tobacco products purchased. The invoices shall show the name and address of the seller and the date of purchase. The distributor *or remote retail seller* shall preserve a legible copy of each invoice for three years after the date of purchase. Invoices shall be available for inspection by authorized agents or employees of the Department at the distributor's *place of business or remote retail seller's* place of business. *If the remote retail seller cannot produce the required invoice information and the excise tax is being remitted using the actual cost list method to calculate the excise tax, the remote retail seller shall provide the remote retail seller's certified actual cost list to the department for each SKU to be offered for remote retail sale in the subsequent calendar year. The actual cost list shall be updated quarterly as new SKUs are added to a remote retail seller's inventory. New SKUs will be added using the actual cost first paid for the SKU. This method shall not be used unless the actual cost list has been filed with the Department for the previous calendar year.*

E. Any violation of § 58.1-1021.04:1, 58.1-1021.04:2, 58.1-1021.04:3, or 58.1-1021.04:4 of this article shall be grounds for revocation of the license.