

# Do tanning salons comply with state laws restricting access to minors?

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Researchers posed as minors to investigate compliance rates in 42 states

and the District of Columbia with laws restricting tanning bed use by minors and they report an overall noncompliance rate of 37 percent, according to an article published by *JAMA Dermatology*.

Most states have enacted laws to prevent or create barriers to [tanning](#) establishments by minors. Still, nearly 2 million [high school students](#) in the United States indoor tan. It has been estimated that banning [indoor tanning](#) for minors would prevent thousands of melanomas and melanoma deaths, as well as millions of dollars in treatment costs.

Erik J. Stratman, M.D., of the Marshfield Clinic in Wisconsin, and coauthors conducted a telephone survey where researchers posed as minors in a scripted call to 427 tanning facilities. Posing as minors, the researchers said they wanted to tan before an upcoming family vacation. Tanning facility employees were asked about session costs and whether a parent needed to be present to consent to the tanning session.

The authors reports that 159 of 427 (37.2 percent) tanning facilities were out of compliance with state legislation. The most common reason to be out of compliance was allowing tanning without parental consent at a banned age, according to the results.

There were more noncompliant tanning facilities in rural areas, the South, in states with laws governing younger minors (age 15 or less) and in those states with more than one tanning regulation. Independently owned tanning salons also were more likely than chain tanning facilities to be noncompliant.

Limitations of the study include its scripted telephone encounters because compliance rates may have been higher with in-person encounters.

"While most states in the United States have passed legislation regarding

youth access to indoor tanning, our study demonstrates that tanning salon [compliance](#) with legislation remains a problem," the article concludes.

**More information:** *JAMA Dermatology* (2017). [DOI: 10.1001/jamadermatol.2017.3736](#)

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