

## Energy Drinks: Information for Retailers

Energy drinks are an important part of retailers' soft drinks offer to their customers but can occasionally attract concern from the local community, especially from parents and schools, around the consumption of energy drinks by young people.

Retailers should be conscious of these concerns and develop policies based on their own business and the place that energy drinks have in it, and local circumstances in the communities they serve.

This document sets out some general information about the definition of energy drinks, some examples of how retailers have responded to concerns in their community and the caffeine content of energy drinks.

### What are energy drinks?

The legal definition of energy drinks is dependent on the amount of caffeine per litre, the threshold is 150mg of caffeine per litre.

If an energy drink has 150mg of caffeine per litre (mg/l) it must be labelled with the term 'high caffeine content. Not recommended for children or pregnant or breast feeding women.' The label must also include the caffeine content of the product in mg per 100ml.

Energy drinks are not sports drinks which are specifically designed to help athletes and other active people hydrate before, during and after exercise.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### ***Can energy drinks be sold to under 16s?***

Yes, there are no age restrictions on the sale of any caffeine containing foods and beverages, including energy drinks.

#### ***Do under 16 year olds need to provide an ID to buy an energy drink?***

No, there is no legal requirement for children under 16 years old to produce ID to purchase any caffeine containing foods and beverages including energy drinks.

#### ***Is there a maximum amount that I can sell in one transaction?***

No, there are no legal limits on the amount of any caffeine containing food or beverage, including energy drinks that someone can purchase in one transaction. However, the products include labels that state "Consume Moderately" (or similar words).

#### ***Are energy drinks safe for children and adolescents?***

Yes, energy drinks are safe. All the functional ingredients of energy drinks have undergone a rigorous safety evaluation.

### More Information

The British Soft Drinks Association has a code of practice for suppliers that can be viewed here:  
<http://www.britishsoftdrinks.com/Energy-Drinks>

The Association of Convenience Stores provides Assured Advice and best practice on preventing underage sales.

## Energy Drinks: Policy Options

Listed below are a range of examples of retailers' policies on energy drinks and the ways they have responded to concerns raised by communities.

Its intention is to provide you with a menu of options that you could employ as you deem appropriate in your business to respond to community concerns. You may choose:

### Age Restrictions

- You may choose to restrict sale to those over a specified age. This could be 16 or it could be another age limit agreed locally.
- Such a policy would mean that you would only sell energy drinks to individuals that present identification to show they are over the specified age.
- This policy could be used alongside a 'challenge' scheme, like Challenge 25, to ensure staff are challenging customers that are older than the specified age.

*Important Note: Energy drinks cannot be age restricted for individuals over the age of 18 years old.*

### Quantity Restrictions

- Some retailers have introduced limits on the number of energy drinks they sell in one transaction to a young person.

### Schools

Where retailers are asked to engage with local schools they should try and agree an approach on energy drink sales, for example:

- Not selling energy drinks to children in school uniform;
- Not selling energy drinks to children at agreed times.

### Parents

- Retailers have responded to parents concerns about energy drinks by refusing to serve individual children

### How much caffeine do energy drinks contain?

Not all energy drinks contain caffeine. However, a regular sized caffeine based energy drink (250ml) contains approximately the same amount of caffeine as a cup of instant coffee.

Product	Mg Caffeine
Large coffee shop coffee (568ml)	400
Energy drink (500ml)	160
Cup of filter coffee (250ml)	140
Cup of instant coffee (250ml)	100
Energy drink (250ml)	80
Cup of tea (250ml)	75
Plain chocolate bar (150g)	50
Regular cola drink (330ml)	40