

Tobacco retail density in British Columbia

In British Columbia, tobacco retailers are required to have a Tobacco Retail Authorization (TRA), which is issued under the authority of the *Tobacco Tax Act* and its regulations.¹ This requirement has been in place since 2007. There is no cost for receiving this authorization, but retailers must meet certain conditions:

- Those who receive authorization must be “actively in the business”.
- There must be a separate authorization for each retail outlet.

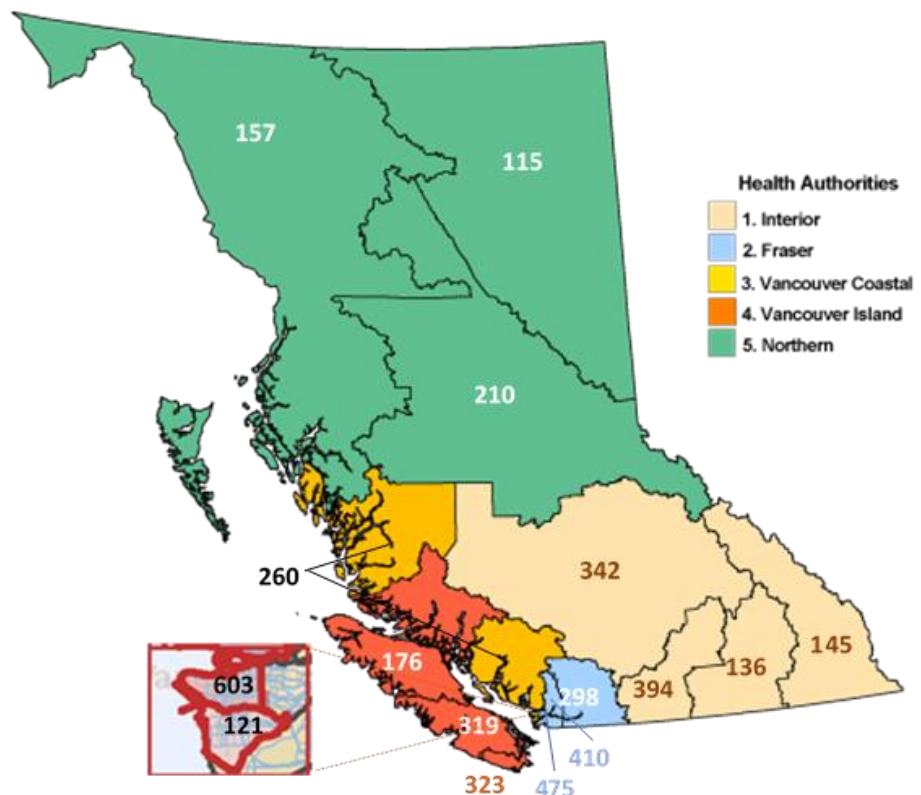
With these conditions in place, the number of retailers who are authorized to sell tobacco products can be accepted as a reasonable estimate of the number of retailers. A list of the number of retailers authorized to retail tobacco in October 2019 in each B.C. community was obtained from the B.C. Ministry of Finance.

As might be expected, there are significant differences in the density of retail outlets.

Expressed in terms of density of retailers per population, there are relatively fewer retailers in the highly populated lower mainland, and relatively more in the more sparsely populated northern regions.

Expressed as density per physical area, retailers are far more sparsely located in the north, interior and coastal areas.

Number of authorized tobacco retailers per health service delivery areas.



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Health Service Delivery Area/ Local Health Authority	Number of retailers 2918 ²	% of retail stores	% of population (2016)	% of smokers	Current smoking % (age 12+) 2015-2016 ³	population 2016 ⁴	Stores per 100,000
East Kootenay	145	3.2%	1.7%	2.0%	16.8%	79,856	182
1150 Creston	23						
1110 East Kootenay	32						
1160 Golden	20						
1130 Kimberley	12						
1120 Kootenay Boundary	32						
1140 Windermere	26						
Kootenay Boundary	136	3.0%	1.7%	2.1%	17.7%	78,463	173
1240 Arrow Lakes	12						
1230 Castlegar	17						
1270 Grand Forks	25						
1210 Kootenay Lake	11						
1220 Nelson	47						
1250 Trail	24						
Okanagan	394	8.8%	7.8%	8.2%	15.3%	362,258	109
1350 Armstrong-Spallumcheen	10						
1370 Central Okanagan	181						
1390 Enderby	15						
1330 Keremeos	56						
1320 Penticton	3						
1340 Princeton	12						
1310 Southern Okanagan	30						
1380 Summerland	11						
1360 Vernon	76						
Thompson Cariboo Shuswap	342	7.6%	4.7%	6.1%	18.7%	219,467	156
1440 100 Mile House	24						
1460 Cariboo-Chilcotin	41						
1430 Kamloops	129						
1470 Lillooet	10						
1490 Merritt	29						
1450 North Thompson	12						
1410 Revelstoke	22						
1420 Salmon Arm	55						
1480 South Cariboo	20						
Fraser East	298	6.6%	6.4%	6.6%	15.5%	295,763	101
2130 Abbotsford	109						
2150 Agassiz-Harrison	17						
2120 Chilliwack	96						
2110 Hope	22						
2140 Mission	54						
Fraser North	410	9.1%	13.8%	11.7%	11.7%	639,245	64
2220 Burnaby	136						
2230 Maple Ridge - Pitt Meadows	78						
2210 New Westminster	64						
2240 Tri-Cities	132						
Fraser South	475	10.6%	16.9%	14.3%	11.9%	784,977	61
2320 Delta	78						
2310 Langley	114						
2340 South Surrey-White Rock	11						
2330 Surrey	272						
Richmond	121	2.7%	4.3%	3.4%	10.2%^E	198,309	61
3110 Richmond	121						
Vancouver	603	13.4%	14.0%	14.6%	13.8%	649,028	93
3200 Vancouver	603						
North Shore - Coast Garibaldi	260	5.8%	6.1%	5.5%	13.5%	284,389	91
3360 Bella Coola	10						
3370 Central Coast	1						
3350 Howe Sound	45						
3310 North Vancouver	100						
3340 Powell River	29						
3330 Sunshine Coast	45						
3320 West Vancouver	30						

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South Vancouver Island	323	7.2%	8.2%	8.4%	14.6%	383,360	84
4110 Greater Victoria	242						
4130 Saanich Peninsula	54						
4140 Southern Gulf Islands	18						
4120 Western Communities	9						
Central Vancouver Island	319	7.1%	5.8%	5.9%	14.8%	270,817	118
4260 Alberni-Clayoquot	58						
4230 Cowichan Valley North	29						
4210 Cowichan Valley South	50						
4220 Cowichan Valley West	14						
4240 Greater Nanaimo	119						
4250 Oceanside	49						
North Vancouver Island	176	3.9%	2.6%	2.9%	16.1%	122,233	144
4310 Comox Valley	64						
4320 Greater Campbell River	59						
4340 Vancouver Island North	40						
4330 Vancouver Island West	13						
Northwest	157	3.5%	1.5%	1.3%	13.9%	71,553	219
5100 Haida Gwaii	24						
5150 Kitimat	25						
5180 Nisga'a	5						
5120 Prince Rupert	31						
5140 Smithers	22						
5110 Snow Country	6						
5160 Stikine	6						
5190 Telegraph Creek	3						
5170 Terrace	24						
5130 Upper Skeena	11						
Northern Interior	210	4.7%	3.0%	4.0%	19.9%	140,452	150
5220 Burns Lake	18						
5230 Nechako	32						
5240 Prince George	126						
5210 Quesnel	34						
Northeast	115	2.6%	1.5%	3.0%	29.8%	67,885	169
5330 Fort Nelson	17						
5320 Peace River North	53						
5310 Peace River South	45						
Unclassifiable	3						
Total	4487	100%	100%	100%		4,648,055	96

E=interpret with caution

Sources:

- 1 British Columbia. Tobacco Tax Act. Tobacco Tax Act Regulation, s. 6.
- 2 Number of retailers provided by B.C. Ministry of Finance, October 2019.
- 3 Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey 2015-2016. Table 13-10-0113-01 (formerly CANSIM 105-0509)
- 4 Statistics Canada. Census Profile, 2016 Census. Health Regions, British Columbia.