

# ABUSABLE VOLATILE CHEMICALS:

## *What Retailers need to Know*



### **What is an Abusable Volatile Chemical (AVC)?**

An AVC is nitrous oxide or a chemical packaged as a consumer product that meets both of the following criteria:

- Label reads "VAPOR HARMFUL" in all capital letters.
- Content may affect a person's central nervous system. It can create or induce intoxication, hallucination, or elation. It may also change, distort, or disturb a person's eyesight, thinking process, balance, or coordination. This happens when a person inhales, ingests, or introduces an AVC into their body.

### **Why is a permit needed to sell an AVC product at retail?**

The AVC Act requires retailers to have a permit to sell AVCs. The goal of the law is to prevent inhalant abuse among minors. The law regulates the sale of AVCs often used as inhalants. The law requires a retailer to get an AVC Permit before selling an AVC product. It also prohibits the sale of these products to anyone under the age of 18.

### **Why is inhalant abuse harmful?**

Inhalant abuse is harmful because of the short and long-term health effects including:

- impaired memory;
- slurred speech;
- impaired vision;
- seizures; and
- permanent loss of muscle control, nerve damage, and death.



### **How do I get an AVC Permit?**

You can apply for an AVC Permit by submitting the AVC Permit Application. You can find the application at [dshs.texas.gov/avc](https://dshs.texas.gov/avc), in the "Forms and Publications" section.

### **How do I renew my AVC Permit?**

Renew your AVC Permit online at [dshs.texas.gov/regulatory/online-licensing](https://dshs.texas.gov/regulatory/online-licensing).

## Is there a list of regulated AVC products?

No, because new products come on the market regularly. However, a retailer can identify AVC products by reading the label. All AVC products except for nitrous oxide can be identified by the statement of principle hazard, "VAPOR HARMFUL", on the label. Common types of AVC products include:

- Spray Paint
- Wax
- Polish
- Glue
- Cleaner
- Degreaser
- Nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) / Whippets or whip-its cartridges (used to charge whipped cream dispensers)

## What do I do if I want to sell AVC products?

Texas retailers must:

- Get an AVC Permit for each location where you will sell AVCs.
- Make the AVC Permit available for Department of State Health Services (DSHS) inspection.
- Post an easily visible AVC Warning Sign. The sign must meet the DSHS AVC rule requirements. You can download the Warning Sign at [dshs.texas.gov/avc/forms](https://dshs.texas.gov/avc/forms).
- Restrict sales of AVC products to those 18 years of age or older.
- Ensure one of the following is done before displaying aerosol (spray) paint for sale in counties with populations of 75,000 or more:
  - Restrict access to aerosol paint;
  - Set up a computerized checkout system. The system must alert the cashier when aerosol paint is being purchased. The alert reminds the cashier to verify the purchaser is at least 18 years of age; or
  - Keep the aerosol paint in an area that is electronically protected or monitored.

## AVC Retail Sales Checklist:

- Know the AVC law.
- Check your inventory.
- Get an AVC Permit if you sell AVC products.
- Post an AVC Warning Sign.
- Restrict access to spray paint, if required.
- Train employees not to sell AVC products to minors.

## **FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE AVC REGULATIONS MAY RESULT IN ADMINISTRATIVE OR CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.**

## Where can I find more information?

For more information about AVC regulations, permits, fee schedules, and licensing procedures in Texas, visit [dshs.texas.gov/avc](https://dshs.texas.gov/avc) or call 512-834-6600. For general information, visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse website at [drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/inhalants](https://drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/inhalants).