

CHAPTER 325D

RESTRAINT OF TRADE

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325D.01 DEFINITIONS.

[For text of subds 1 to 4, see M.S.2000]

Subd. 5. **Cost.** The term “cost”, as applied to the wholesale or retail vendor, means:

(1) The actual current delivered invoice or replacement cost, whichever is lower, without deducting customary cash discounts, plus any excise or sales taxes imposed on such commodity, goods, wares or merchandise subsequent to the purchase thereof and prior to the resale thereof, plus the cost of doing business at that location by the vendor;

(2) Where a manufacturer publishes a list price and discounts, in determining such “cost” the manufacturer’s published list price then currently in effect, less the published trade discount but without deducting the customary cash discount, plus any excise or sales taxes imposed on such commodity, goods, wares or merchandise subsequent to the purchase thereof and prior to the resale thereof, plus the cost of doing business by the vendor shall be prima facie evidence of “cost”;

(3) For purposes of gasoline offered for sale by way of posted price or indicating meter by a retailer, at a retail location where gasoline is dispensed into passenger automobiles and trucks by the consumer, “cost” means the average terminal price on the day, at the terminal from which the most recent supply of gasoline delivered to the retail location was acquired, plus all applicable state and federal excise taxes and fees, plus the lesser of six percent or eight cents.

[For text of subds 6 to 10, see M.S.2000]

Subd. 11. **Terminal.** “Terminal” means a storage facility to which gasoline is shipped by pipeline, barge, or rail, and from which gasoline is subsequently transferred into motor vehicles for delivery to other locations. For purposes of this chapter, an oil refinery is also a terminal.

Subd. 12. **Average terminal price.** “Average terminal price” means the arithmetic mean of all prices for an individual grade of gasoline at a terminal as published by a nationally recognized petroleum price reporting service.

History: 2001 c 129 s 1-3

325D.33 SALES AT LESS THAN COST; PENALTY.

[For text of subds 1 and 2, see M.S.2000]

Subd. 2a. **Commissioner.** “Commissioner” means the commissioner of commerce or the commissioner’s designated representative.

[For text of subds 3 and 4, see M.S.2000]

Subd. 5. [Repealed, 1Sp2001 c 5 art 20 s 24]

[For text of subd 6, see M.S.2000]

Subd. 8. **Penalties.** (a) A retailer who sells cigarettes for less than a legal retail price may be assessed a penalty in the full amount of three times the difference between the actual selling price and a legal price under sections 325D.30 to 325D.42. This penalty may be collected by the commissioner under the authorities given the

commissioner of revenue in chapter 270, and the penalty shall bear interest at the rate prescribed by section 270.75, subdivision 5.

(b) A wholesaler who sells cigarettes for less than a legal price may be assessed a penalty in the full amount of three times the difference between the actual selling price and the legal price under sections 325D.30 to 325D.42. This penalty may be collected by the commissioner under the authorities given the commissioner of revenue in chapter 270, and the penalty shall bear interest at the rate prescribed by section 270.75, subdivision 5.

(c) A retailer who engages in a plan, scheme, or device with a wholesaler to purchase cigarettes at a price which the retailer knows to be less than a legal price may be assessed a penalty in the full amount of three times the difference between the actual purchase price and the legal price under sections 325D.30 to 325D.42. A retailer that coerces or requires a wholesaler to sell cigarettes at a price which the retailer knows to be less than a legal price may be assessed a penalty in the full amount of three times the difference between the actual purchase price and the legal price. These penalties may be collected by the commissioner under the authorities given the commissioner of revenue in chapter 270, and the penalties shall bear interest at the rate prescribed by section 270.75, subdivision 5.

For purposes of this subdivision, a retailer is presumed to know that a purchase price is less than a legal price if any of the following have been done:

(1) the commissioner has published the legal price in the Minnesota State Register;

(2) the commissioner has provided written notice to the retailer of the legal price;

(3) the commissioner has provided written notice to the retailer that the retailer is purchasing cigarettes for less than a legal price;

(4) the commissioner has issued a written order to the retailer to cease and desist from purchases of cigarettes for less than a legal price; or

(5) there is evidence that the retailer has knowledge of, or has participated in, efforts to disguise or misrepresent the actual purchase price as equal to or more than a legal price, when it is actually less than a legal price.

In any proceeding arising under this subdivision, the commissioner shall have the burden of providing by a reasonable preponderance of the evidence that the facts necessary to establish the presumption set forth in this section exist, or that the retailer had knowledge that a purchase price was less than the legal price.

(d) The commissioner may not assess penalties against any wholesaler, retailer, or combination of wholesaler and retailer, which are greater than three times the difference between the actual price and the legal price under sections 325D.30 to 325D.42.

History: *1Sp2001 c 5 art 20 s 12,13*

325D.405 INVESTIGATIONS.

The commissioner or duly authorized agents may conduct investigations to determine compliance with the provisions of sections 325D.30 to 325D.42 and, in connection with such investigations, the commissioner and duly authorized agents have all the powers conferred upon the commissioner by section 45.027.

History: *1Sp2001 c 5 art 20 s 14*

325D.415 CIGARETTE DISTRIBUTOR FEES.

A cigarette distributor as defined in section 297F.01, subdivision 4, shall pay to the commissioner an annual fee as follows:

(1) a fee of \$2,500 is due from those distributors whose annual cigarette tax collections exceed \$2,000,000; and

(2) a fee of \$1,200 is due from those distributors whose annual cigarette tax collections are \$2,000,000 or less.

The annual fee must be paid by December 31 of each year. The annual fee must be deposited into the general fund.

History: *1Sp2001 c 5 art 20 s 15*

325D.71 UNLAWFUL GASOLINE SALES.

Any offer for sale of gasoline by a retailer by way of posted price or indicating meter that is below cost, as defined by section 325D.01, subdivision 5, clause (3), is a violation of section 325D.04, except that the criminal penalties in section 325D.071 do not apply. In addition to the penalties for violations and the remedies provided for injured parties set forth elsewhere in this chapter, the commissioner of commerce may use the authority under section 45.027 for the purpose of preventing violations of this section. A retailer who sells gasoline at the same or higher legally posted price of a competitor in the same market area, on the same day, is not in violation of this section.

A retailer who offers gasoline for sale at a price below cost as part of a promotion at an individual location for no more than three days in any calendar quarter is not in violation of this section.

History: *2001 c 129 s 4*