

# Pennsylvania Synar Survey



## Results 2011

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# 2011 Synar Results

## Introduction

The Synar survey is a federally regulated annual survey intended to estimate the rate that outlets sell cigarettes to minors.

## Statewide and Strata Results

In 2011, it was estimated that 7% to 12% of Pennsylvania's cigarette outlets sell cigarettes to minors. The estimate was calculated using the weighted mean (9.6%) and standard error (1.2) of the 2011 Synar survey.

**Table 1.** 2011 Statewide Synar Results

Survey Mean (Weighted)	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval
9.6%	1.2	(7.3, 11.8)

The results are “weighted” to account for unequal probabilities of selection and eligible outlets that were not completed. A 95% confidence interval based on the t-distribution is the tool used to make an inference about the entire population from the survey results. The interval, not the survey mean, should be used to describe Pennsylvania's violation rate because it incorporates the survey error. **Table 2** shows the statewide results along with the results of each stratum.

**Table 2.** 2011 Synar Strata Results

Stratum	Outlets Selected	Outlets Completed	PSUs Sampled	Total Violations	Wgtd Mean	Standard Error	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Statewide	1874	1101	576	91	9.6	1.2	7.3	11.8
North Central	128	78	6	10	12.8	1.6	8.7	17.0
North East	291	156	12	21	13.5	5.0	2.4	24.5
North West	148	78	6	11	14.1	5.0	1.2	27.0
South Central	197	132	10	4	3.1	1.7	0.0	6.9
South East	330	206	16	9	4.5	1.5	1.3	7.7
South West	265	144	11	5	3.4	1.6	0.0	7.0
Allegheny	130	74	130	2	2.7	1.9	0.0	6.5
Delaware	60	40	60	4	10.0	4.8	0.3	19.7
Erie	100	54	100	1	1.9	1.9	0.0	5.6
Philadelphia	225	139	225	24	17.3	3.2	10.9	23.6

**Note1:** Confidence limits were calculated using the t-distribution with the degrees of freedom (df) determined by subtracting the total strata from the total clusters. For example, The df for North Central is 5 because there are 6 clusters and 1 stratum.

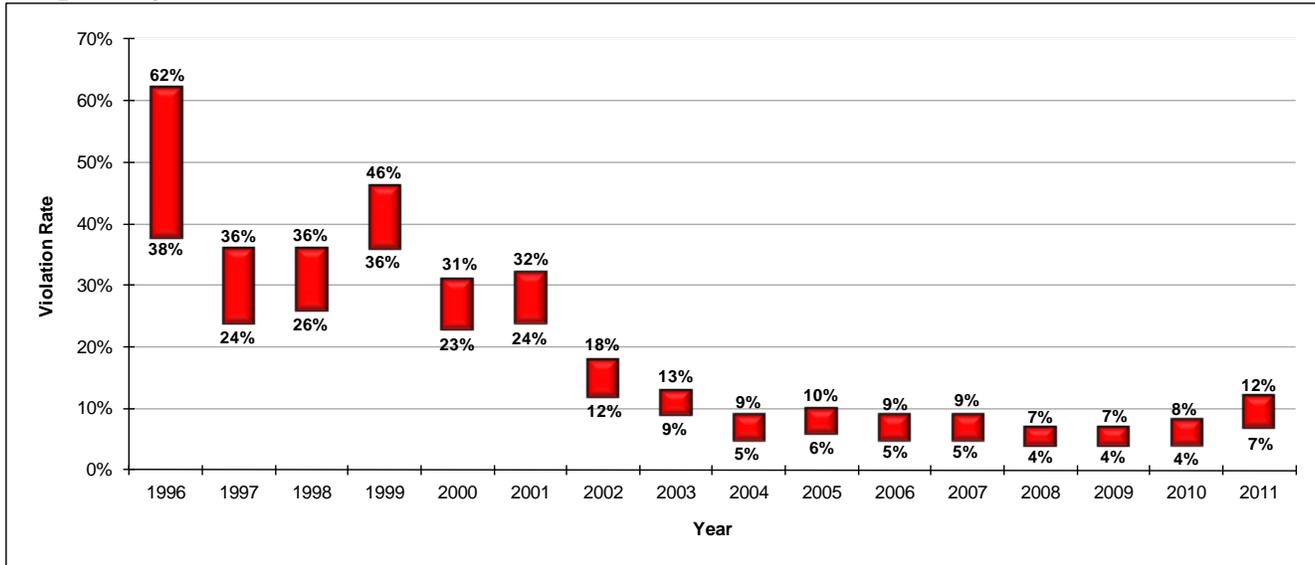
**Note2:** The weighted mean takes into account unequal probabilities of selection and non-completions. It is different than the unweighted mean which is calculated by dividing "Total Violations" by "Outlets Completed". The WEIGHTED rate should be used at all times.

**Note3:** When "Total Violations" = 0, the "Rule of Three (3/n)" is used to calculate Upper limit.

## Comparison to Previous Surveys

Pennsylvania has annually conducted the Synar survey since 1996 (**Graph 1**). Significance tests (Rao-Scott Chi-Square) were used to examine the relationships between the 2011 statewide violation rate and the rates from 2004 to 2010. It was determined that the 2011 estimate was NOT statistically different from the 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 rates but it WAS statistically different from the 2008, 2009 and 2010 estimates.

**Graph 1.** Synar Results 1996 - 2011



## Buyer Gender Results

Both males and females attempted to buy cigarettes for the Synar survey (**Table 3**). A significance test (Rao-Scott Chi-Square) was used to examine the relationship between the buyer's gender and the violation rate for 2011. The test showed that the rate that outlets sold (violation rate) to males was NOT statistically different than the rate that they sold to females.

**Table 3.** 2011 Synar Results – (Weighted Violation Rate by Buyer Gender)

Gender	Total Visited	Violations	Wgtd Rate	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
M	661	50	8.0	5.4	10.7
F	440	41	12.3	8.2	16.5

**Note:** The weighted rate (Wgtd Rate) takes into account unequal probabilities of selection and non-completions. It is different than the unweighted rate which is calculated by dividing the "Violations Count" by the "Total Visited". The WEIGHTED rate should be used at all times.

## Buyer Age Results

The age of the youth surveyor (buyer) ranged from 15 to 17 years old (**Table 4**). Significance tests (Rao-Scott Chi-Square) were used to examine the relationships between the age of the buyer and the violation rate for 2011. The tests showed that there were NO statistical differences between the rate that outlets sold cigarettes (violation rate) to 15 year olds and the rate they sold to 16 year olds. We could not compare 17 year olds because the sample size was too small.

**Table 4.** 2011 Synar Results – (Weighted Violation Rate by Buyer Age)

AGE	Total Visited	Violations	Wgted Rate	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
15	548	43	10.8	7.5	14.0
16	518	47	8.5	5.5	11.4
17	35	1	n/a	n/a	n/a

**Note1:** The weighted rate (Wgted Rate) takes into account unequal probabilities of selection and non-completions. It is different than the unweighted rate which is calculated by dividing the "Violations Count" by the "Total Visited". The WEIGHTED rate should be used at all times.

**Note2:** The rate was not calculated if the sample size was below 40.

## Outlet Type Results

Many different types of outlets sell cigarettes in Pennsylvania and many different types of outlets were visited during the survey. Based on the surveyor's description, every visited outlet was placed into a category. The 2011 Synar Outlet Definitions can be found in the technical notes. The distribution of visited outlets is shown in **Table 5**. Over 66% of the visited outlets belong to the Convenience-Grocery, Convenience-Chain, Gas Station/Auto or Drug Store category.

**Table 5.** 2011 Synar – Distribution of outlets visited

Outlet Type	Visited	Percent
Bar/Tavern	14	1.3%
Beer Distributor	66	6.0%
Convenience-Chain	197	17.9%
Convenience-Grocery	270	24.5%
Deli	43	3.9%
Drug Store	102	9.3%
Gas Station/Auto	161	14.6%
News Outlet	19	1.7%
Restaurant/eatin	16	1.5%
Restaurant/takeout	41	3.7%
Supermarket	86	7.8%
Tobacco	38	3.5%
Other	48	4.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1101</b>	<b>100%</b>

Significance tests (Rao-Scott Chi-Square) were used to examine the relationships between the outlet type and the violation rate for 2011. Among types of outlets with enough sample, the tests showed that there were significant differences in the violation rate between the following types of outlets:

- Beer Distributor AND Convenience-Chain
- Beer Distributor AND Drug Store
- Beer Distributor AND Supermarket
- Convenience-Chain AND Convenience-Grocery
- Convenience-Grocery AND Drug Store
- Convenience-Grocery AND Supermarket
- Gas Station AND Supermarket

**Table 6.** 2011 Synar Results – (Violation Rate by Outlet Type)

<b>Outlet Type</b>	<b>Total Visited</b>	<b>Violations</b>	<b>Wgted Rate</b>	<b>Lower Limit</b>	<b>Upper Limit</b>
Bar/Tavern	14	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Beer Distributor	66	7	14.6	3.6	25.6
Convenience-Chain	197	11	5.3	1.6	9.1
Convenience-Grocery	270	37	16.3	10.9	21.7
Deli	43	4	9.7	0.0	21.0
Drug Store	102	2	3.0	0.0	7.7
Gas Station/Auto	161	18	10.6	4.9	16.3
News Outlet	19	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Restaurant/eatin	16	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Restaurant/takeout	41	5	12.6	1.2	24.0
Supermarket	86	3	3.1	0.0	6.7
Tobacco	38	1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other	48	3	7.4	0.0	17.1

**Note1:** The weighted rate (Wgted Rate) takes into account unequal probabilities of selection and non-completions. It is different than the unweighted rate which is calculated by dividing the "Violations Count" by the "Total Visited". The WEIGHTED rate should be used at all times.

**Note2:** The rate was not calculated if the sample size was below 40.

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# Technical Notes

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## Background

In July 1992, Congress enacted the ADAMHA (Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration) Reorganization Act (P.L. 103-321), which included the Synar amendment. One of the core requirements was to conduct random, unannounced inspections of outlets that sell tobacco to produce an annual estimate of the statewide rate that they sell tobacco products to minors. The Synar survey was created to satisfy this requirement.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services clarified the Synar Amendment by issuing the Synar Regulation in January of 1996. SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, was chosen to implement the regulation. The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) is an agency of SAMHSA in charge of Synar regulation. According to the “Synar Regulation Implementation Report”, each state must:

- Have in effect a law prohibiting any manufacturer, retailer, or distributor of tobacco products from selling or distributing such products to any individual under the age of 18.
- Enforce such laws in a manner that can reasonably be expected to reduce the illegal sales of tobacco products to individuals under the age of 18.
- Conduct annual, random, unannounced inspections to ensure compliance with the law. These inspections are to be conducted in such a way as to provide a valid probability sample of outlets accessible to youth.
- Develop a strategy and negotiate with SAMHSA a timeframe for achieving an inspection failure rate of less than 20 percent of outlets accessible to youth.
- Submit an annual report describing in detail the State's survey methodology and activities to enforce its law.

Failure to meet the requirements of the Synar Regulation could result in graduated penalties against a State's SAPT (Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment) Block Grant, as specified in the statute.

The intent of the survey is to assess the effectiveness of Pennsylvania's enforcement programs by measuring the rate that outlets sell cigarettes to minors. If the rate is high then enforcement is failing. The survey does not lower the rate, it only measures it.

## SAMHSA Detailed Survey Requirements

SAMHSA clarified the Synar regulation and provided specific survey requirements in the “Synar Regulation: Sample Design Guidance (May 2003)”. Below is a list of these requirements and how Pennsylvania fared in 2011.

- 1. Obtain approval from SAMHSA in writing for any changes in sampling methodology prior to implementation of the Synar survey.***

There were no methodology changes for the 2011 survey.

**2. Develop a sampling frame that includes both over-the-counter and vending machine locations accessible to youth.**

Pennsylvania only samples over-the-counter locations. Act 2002-112 restricted the placement of vending machines to locations inaccessible to minors. Since vending machines could only be located in areas inaccessible to minors, SAMHSA approved the exclusion of vending machines from the Pennsylvania survey.

**3. Develop a sampling frame that includes, at a minimum, 80 percent of the tobacco outlets in the State.**

Pennsylvania develops the sampling frame from the Department of Revenue's Electronic Cigarette Licensing System (ECLS). Pennsylvania requires a license to sell cigarettes and the ECLS contains a complete list of all locations licensed to sell cigarettes. Current licenses are annually renewed by January 15th. The latest coverage survey conducted in 2010, estimated that Pennsylvania's sampling frame included 99.5 % of the tobacco outlets in the state.

**4. Select a sample of outlets to inspect that is representative of the geographic distribution of all tobacco outlets accessible to youth in the State. Decide whether to use clustering or stratification or both.**

Pennsylvania used both clustering and stratification and was representative of the geographic distribution. The sample size for each stratum roughly mirrored the population distribution of outlets.

**5. Design a sampling methodology and implementation plan that are based on sound survey sampling methodology. Choose a sample design and decide on a random sampling method for each stage of sampling.**

Pennsylvania used a sound methodology and implementation plan with a valid probability sample where the probability of selection for each outlet was nonzero. A two stage sampling design was used where the first stage selected PSUs from within each stratum using probability proportionate to size (PPS) sampling technique. Stage two involved randomly selecting a pre-determined number of outlets from each of the sampled PSUs.

**6. Estimate the original sample size before implementing the Synar survey. Base the estimate of the original sample size on the results of calculations of the minimum sample size needed to meet SAMHSA's precision requirement plus extra sample needed to account for the expected completion rate and the expected accuracy rate.**

Pennsylvania calculated the sample size by first calculating the Effective Sample Size. According to CSAP requirements, the width ( $w$ ) of the upper limit of the confidence interval (*c.i.*) must be less than or equal to 3 %. Using the equation for the upper limit of a 95% confidence interval of the sample mean  $\bar{x}$  gives

$$\bar{x} + w \quad (S1)$$

applying the CSAP requirement for  $w$  gives

$$w \leq 3 \quad (S2)$$

Where  $w$  is defined as

$$w = z(s.e.) \quad (S3)$$

Substituting S3 into S2

$$z(s.e.) \leq 3 \quad (S4)$$

Where  $z$  is the critical value of the standard normal distribution for a one sided 95% *c.i.* and  $s.e.$  is the standard error or standard deviation estimated from the sample data. Substituting 1.645 for  $z$  and solving equation S4 for  $s.e.$  gives

$$s.e. \leq \frac{3}{1.645} \leq 1.82$$

Therefore the  $s.e.$  must be less than or equal to 1.82 to maintain a width of 3% or less for a right-sided 95% *c.i.*.

Ignoring the finite population correction, the  $s.e.$  is defined as,

$$s.e. = \frac{\sqrt{p(1-p)}}{\sqrt{n_e}} \quad (S5)$$

Substituting S5 into S3 gives

$$w = z \left( \frac{\sqrt{p(1-p)}}{\sqrt{n_e}} \right)$$

Solving for  $n_e$  gives the equation for the effective sample size

$$n_e = \left( \frac{z}{w} \right)^2 p(1-p),$$

Where  $z = 1.645$ ,  $w = 0.03$  (both  $z$  &  $w$  are based on 95% one-sided *c.i.* with tolerance of 3%) and  $p = 3\%$  over the target rate (20% + 3% = 23%).

Next, the Target Sample Size was calculate using the equation:

$$n_t = \text{Deff}_h \times n_e,$$

where  $\text{Deff}_h$  is the highest design effect from historical Synar surveys of a similar design.

Finally, the Original Sample Size is calculated using the combined equation:

$$n_o = \frac{n_t}{r_l r_c} + n_A + n_S;$$

$r_l$  = lowest eligibility rate of historical Synar surveys of similar design.

$r_c$  = lowest completion rate of historical Synar surveys of similar design or 80% (whichever is lower).

$n_A$  = sample added or subtracted needed to fit the clustered sample design.

$n_S$  = supplemental sample.

$n_A$  is the number of sample added or subtracted to guarantee that our precision goals are met and the sample size fits the design. The size of  $n_A$  is estimated after reviewing output created by a SAS program designed to simulate survey outcomes with varying designs.  $n_S$  is the number of supplemental sample allocated to the clustered areas due to sample attrition. Supplemental sample is issued if a cluster does not obtain the minimum number of completions allowed per cluster.

7. ***SAMHSA requires the results to be reported with a right-sided 95-percent confidence interval. The precision requirement for the estimate of the violation rate must have the right-side limit within 0.03 or 3 percentage points from the violation rate estimate. Using the normal distribution, the requirement can be translated into the statement that 1.645 times the standard error (s.e.) of the estimate be within 0.03. That is,  $1.645 \times s.e. \leq 0.03$  or***

$$s.e. \leq \frac{0.03}{1.645} = 0.0182$$

Pennsylvania is required to report the results of the survey within the Annual Synar Report (ASR). The confidence interval (*c.i.*) reported in the ASR is different than what is reported in this document because of rounding error and the different methods of calculation. The ASR requires a one-sided *c.i.* that assumes a normal distribution. This document employs a two-sided *c.i.* assuming a t-distribution. Confidence intervals may be either one-sided or two-sided, although a two-sided *c.i.* is most commonly used. In the case of the ASR, where the objective is to determine whether the retailer violation rate is equal to or less than the State target rate (20%), the right-sided *c.i.* is more appropriate than the two-sided interval.

The right-sided 95% *c.i.* is always bounded by zero on the left. The right-side limit is given by (violation rate estimate) + (critical value for a normal one-sided 95% *c.i.*) × (Standard Error of the estimate). The two-sided 95% *c.i.* used in this report and most publications is calculated by (violation rate estimate) + (critical value for a t-distribution two-sided 95% *c.i.*) × (Standard Error of the estimate). The critical value for a normal one-sided 95% *c.i.* is always 1.645 and critical value for a t-distribution two-sided 95% *c.i.* approaches 1.96 as the sample size increases. For example, if the violation rate = 9.58, standard error = 1.15 and there is a sufficiently large sample size, then the confidence intervals for the two methods are calculated as follows:

<b>95% one-sided c.i. (Normal-dist)</b>	<b>95% two-sided c.i. (t-dist)</b>
$9.58 + (1.645 \times 1.15) = [0, 11.5]$	$9.58 \pm (1.96 \times 1.15) = [7.3, 11.8]$

The precision level was achieved. The 2011 survey had a standard error of 0.012 which is less than the required 0.0182.

**8. Determine a method of selecting additional outlets to inspect should it not be possible to reach the required minimum number of completed inspections due to sample attrition.**

Pennsylvania uses an approved supplemental sample system where additional outlets are issued when a minimum of 13 outlets aren't completed per cluster. The outlets are randomly selected from the unsampled outlets in the cluster. There were 322 supplemental sample issued in 2011.

**9. Obtain a completion rate of 90 percent or better.**

Pennsylvania had a 99.6 % completion rate in 2011.

**10. Record the actual steps of the survey process in the field, and keep records of all sources of sample attrition in the field.**

Pennsylvania reported the actual steps of the survey process in the Annual Synar Report and kept all records.

**11. Incorporate the complexity of the sample design as a factor when analyzing the survey results.**

Pennsylvania used the Taylor series (linearization) method to estimate sampling errors of estimators based on complex sample designs. This method takes into account the variances among PSUs.

**12. Weight the results of the Synar survey to account for unequal probabilities of selection, differences in percentages of eligible outlets between strata or clusters, and other deviations from the intended design.**

A base weight is calculated for each outlet using the inverse of the probability of selection for each outlet divided by the total eligible outlets in the stratum (ELIGN). The base weight gives each sampled outlet a weight such that it sums to the number of eligible outlets in the state.

First, the probability of selection was calculated. In a complex design, such as this, the overall probability of selecting an outlet is the product of each stage's probability of selection.

$$(\text{Probability of selecting a cluster}) \times (\text{Probability of selecting an outlet within the cluster})$$

*PROBCL* = Probability of selecting a cluster

*PROBOUT* = Probability of selecting an outlet within the cluster

*PROBST* = Probability of selection for each outlet in the stratum

*NCLUST* = Number of clusters in the stratum

*CPS* = Cluster population size

*ELIGN* = Eligible stratum population size

*SAMPSIZE* = Sample size of the cluster

*SAMPOBS* = The number of completed and eligible sample per cluster

$$PROBCL = (NCLUST) \times \left( \frac{CPS}{ELIGN} \right)$$

$$PROBOUT = \left( \frac{SAMPSIZE}{CPS} \right)$$

$$\begin{aligned} PROBST &= (PROBCL) \times (PROBOUT) = \\ &= (NCLUST) \times \left( \frac{CPS}{ELIGN} \right) \times \left( \frac{SAMPSIZE}{CPS} \right) = \\ &= (NCLUST) \times \left( \frac{SAMPSIZE}{ELIGN} \right) \end{aligned}$$

The base weight (*BASEWGT*) is the inverse of the probability of selection.

$$BASEWGT = \frac{1}{(NCLUST)(SAMPSIZE)} \text{ or } \frac{(ELIGN)}{(NCLUST)(SAMPSIZE)}$$

The final weight adjusts the Base Weight for non-completion. The final weight gives each completed eligible outlet a weight such that it sums to the number of eligible outlets in the state. The final weight will always be greater than the base weight unless all sampled outlets are completed and eligible.

$$FINALWGT = BASEWGT \times \left( \frac{SAMPSIZE}{SAMPOBS} \right)$$

**13. Meet Synar Regulation reporting requirements for the survey sampling methodology when completing the Annual Synar Report.**

Pennsylvania met all methodology reporting requirements.

## Survey Design

The population is defined as PA outlets that sell cigarettes and are accessible to minors. The survey uses a sampling frame created from the Department of Revenue's Cigarette License File which contains the name and address of every outlet that purchased a license to sell cigarettes in the state.



## **Outlet Definitions (2011)**

**Bar/Tavern** - The primary purpose of a bar or tavern is to sell alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption. Some bars or taverns provide snacks or entire meals and some don't.

**Beer Distributor** - A Beer Distributor sells beer by the case. It may provide either walk-in or drive-thru service or both. It does not allow on-site consumption and it may also sell other items such as soda or snacks.

**Convenience-Chain** - A store selling a limited variety of food and an assortment of convenience items for the house and vehicle. It is part of a regional or national chain of stores and has multiple outlets in Pennsylvania. The store is usually open long hours for the convenience of customers. Some stores have a self-service microwave oven for heating purchased food. It may sell gasoline, over-the-counter drugs or provide take-out foods, but its major sales items are food. Here is a list of the more popular outlets that should be placed in this category: 7-Eleven, AmPm, A-Plus, Circle K, Cogo's, Convenient Food Marts, Crossroads, E-Z mart, GetGo, Git n Go, Go-Mart, Kwik Fill, QuickStop, Rutters, Sheetz, Stop'n'Go, Stuckey's, Town & Country Food Stores, Turkey Hill, Uni-Mart, Wawa.

**Convenience-Grocery** - A store that sells a limited variety of food and an assortment of convenience items for the house and vehicle but is independently owned and does not belong to a regional or national chain. These outlets are sometimes referred to as country stores, corner stores, general stores, local markets, mini markets, convenience stores, grocery stores or "Mom & Pop" establishments. These outlets may or may not be open for long hours and they may or may not sell gas. Include outdoor produce markets in this category.

**Deli** - A shop that sells cooked or prepared foods ready for consumption such as cheeses, cold cooked meats, sandwiches and salads. Most delicatessens have a sandwich menu, most of which are made to order behind the counter at the time of sale. In addition to made-to-order sandwiches, many delicatessens offer made-to-order green salads. Equally common is a selection of pre-made pasta, potato, chicken, tuna, shrimp, or other variety of salads. Delicatessens also offer a variety of beverages, chips and snacks.

**Drug Store** - Drug Stores sell prescription and over-the-counter medications. They may be part of a national or regional chain of outlets or owned and operated by an independent pharmacist. They may sell other items, but their major image is as a pharmacy.

**Gas Station/Auto Service** - Two types of outlets fit into this category. A gas station that sells gasoline as its major product (it may sell a few snacks) and usually has facilities for car repair. An auto repair or service station repairs automobiles but does not sell gasoline. Included in this category are Giant kiosks, mechanic's garages, oil change outlets and gas stations with little booths that sell a few snacks.

**News Outlet** - News outlets sell newspapers and magazines. They usually sell other items like candy, but their main purpose is selling newspapers and magazines. Include outdoor news stands in this category.

**Restaurant/Eat-In** - The primary purpose of an eat-in restaurant is the preparation and service of food for on-site consumption. It may offer alcoholic beverages and meals for take-out, but its major focus is food service for on-site consumption. Diners are included in this category.

**Restaurant /Take-Out** - Restaurant /Take-Out establishments offer prepared foods primarily for consumption off premises. Some may not offer entire meals such as donut and bagel shops. Examples: Pizza/sub shops, Chinese take-out, bagel shops, and donut/coffee shops.

**Supermarket** - Supermarkets sell food and household items in a large facility. It is a departmentalized self-service store offering a wide variety of food and household merchandise. It is larger in size and has a wider selection than a traditional grocery store. The supermarket typically has meat, produce, dairy and baked goods departments. Along with the items for sale in the various departments, additional items for sell may include canned and packaged goods as well as various nonfood items such as household cleaners, pharmacy products, and pet supplies. This category will include the major chains such as, ACME, Food Lion, Giant, Giant Eagle, Karns, Save-A-Lot, Shop 'n Save and Weis.

**Tobacco** - The tobacco category covers all tobacco outlets, cigarette outlets and cigar shops. These outlets sell tobacco (cigarettes, cigars and/or smokeless tobacco) as their main product.

**Other** - This is a last resort category. Use this category for locations that do not fit in any of the above categories. Describe the type of outlet in the space provided next to the other category. Category examples: check cashing outlets, laundromats, hotels, motels, record outlets, clothing outlets, book stores, hardware stores, video stores, campgrounds, prisons, bowling lanes (not in the bar), fire halls, The Gateway Clipper (boat), train stations, auto auctions, bait shops, car dealerships, etc.