

Department of Health and Human Services

DEPARTMENTAL APPEALS BOARD

Civil Remedies Division

Center for Tobacco Products,
(FDA No. FDA-2014-H-0739)

Complainant

v.

Q Superette K, Inc. / Soudabeh Khalili
d/b/a Q Superette,

Respondent.

Docket No. C-14-1247

Decision No. CR3405

Date: October 6, 2014

INITIAL DECISION AND DEFAULT JUDGMENT

The Center for Tobacco Products (CTP) began this matter by serving an administrative complaint on Respondent, Q Superette K, Inc. / Soudabeh Khalili d/b/a Q Superette, at 3519 West Colfax Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80204, and by filing a copy of the complaint with the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Division of Dockets Management. The complaint alleges that Q Superette impermissibly sold cigarettes to minors and failed to verify, by means of photo identification containing a date of birth, that the purchasers were 18 years of age or older, thereby violating the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (Act), 21 U.S.C. § 301 *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations, 21 C.F.R. pt. 1140. CTP seeks to impose a \$500 civil money penalty against Respondent Q Superette.

As provided for in 21 C.F.R. §§ 17.5 and 17.7, on June 4, 2014, CTP served the complaint on Respondent Q Superette by United Parcel Service. In the complaint and accompanying cover letter, CTP explained that, within 30 days, Respondent should pay the penalty, file an answer, or request an extension of time in which to file an answer.

CTP warned Respondent that, if it failed to take one of these actions within 30 days, the Administrative Law Judge could, pursuant to 21 C.F.R. § 17.11, issue an initial decision ordering it to pay the full amount of the proposed penalty.

Though CTP served Respondent Q Superette with the complaint on June 4, 2014, it did not file proof of service with the Civil Remedies Division until August 8, 2014. Upon receiving CTP's proof of service more than two months after CTP served the Respondent, I granted Respondent an extension of time in which to file an answer and issued an Initial Order Establishing Procedures. Respondent Q Superette has not filed an answer within the time I provided, nor has it requested an extension of time within which to file an answer. Pursuant to 21 C.F.R. § 17.11, I assume that the facts alleged in the complaint (but not its conclusory statements) are true. Specifically:

- At approximately 7:16 p.m. on June 25, 2013, at Respondent's business establishment, 3519 West Colfax Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80204, an FDA-commissioned inspector observed Respondent's staff selling a package of Camel Blue cigarettes to a person younger than 18 years of age. The inspector also observed that staff failed to verify, by means of photographic identification containing a date of birth, that the purchaser was 18 years of age or older;
- In a warning letter issued July 25, 2013, CTP informed Respondent of the inspector's June 25, 2013 observations, and that such actions violate federal law, 21 C.F.R. § 1140.14(a) and (b)(1). The letter further warned that Respondent's failure to correct its violations could result in a civil money penalty or other regulatory action;
- At approximately 4:57 p.m. on January 10, 2014, at Respondent's business establishment, 3519 West Colfax Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80204, FDA-commissioned inspectors documented Respondent's staff selling a package of Camel Blue cigarettes to a person younger than 18 years of age. The inspectors also documented that staff failed to verify, by means of photographic identification containing a date of birth, that the purchaser was 18 years of age or older.

These facts establish Respondent Q Superette's liability under the Act. The Act prohibits misbranding of a tobacco product. 21 U.S.C. § 331(k). A tobacco product is misbranded if sold or distributed in violation of regulations issued under section 906(d) of the Act. 21 U.S.C. § 387f(d); *see* 21 U.S.C. § 387c(a)(7)(B); 21 C.F.R. § 1140.1(b). The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued the regulations at 21 C.F.R. pt. 1140 under section 906(d) of the Act. 21 U.S.C. § 387a-1; *see* 21 U.S.C. § 387f(d)(1); 75 Fed. Reg. 13,225, 13,229 (Mar. 19, 2010). Under 21 C.F.R. § 1140.14(a), no retailer may sell cigarettes to any person younger than 18 years of age.

