

Department of Health and Human Services

DEPARTMENTAL APPEALS BOARD

Civil Remedies Division

Center for Tobacco Products,
(FDA No. FDA-2014-H-1034)

Complainant

v.

Downtown Corner 1 LLC
d/b/a Downtown Corner and Variety,

Respondent.

Docket No. C-14-1522

Decision No. CR3391

Date: September 29, 2014

INITIAL DECISION AND DEFAULT JUDGMENT

The Center for Tobacco Products (CTP) began this matter by serving an administrative complaint on Respondent, Downtown Corner 1 LLC d/b/a Downtown Corner and Variety, at 966 Main Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604, and by filing a copy of the complaint with the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Division of Dockets Management. The complaint alleges that Downtown Corner and Variety 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 Downtown Corner and Variety.

As provided for in 21 C.F.R. §§ 17.5 and 17.7, on July 30, 2014, CTP served the complaint on Respondent Downtown Corner and Variety 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.

Respondent Downtown Corner and Variety has neither filed an answer within the time prescribed, nor 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 11:51 a.m. on August 26, 2013, at Respondent's business establishment, 966 Main Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604, an FDA-commissioned inspector observed Respondent's staff selling a package of Pall Mall Menthol 100's 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 dated October 24, 2013, CTP informed Respondent of the inspector's August 26, 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 1:03 p.m. on January 27, 2014, at Respondent's business establishment, 966 Main Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604, FDA-commissioned inspectors documented Respondent's staff selling a package of Pall Mall Blue 100's 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 Downtown Corner and Variety'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

