

AGE VERIFICATION AUDIT TERMS - DECODED

Key terms that businesses must understand to provide clarity on age verification and audits, are below.

Age Verification: The process of confirming an individual's age to ensure compliance with legal requirements, particularly in industries selling age-restricted products or services.

Challenge 25: A widely adopted policy where individuals who appear to be under 25 are asked to provide proof of age. This proactive approach ensures compliance even if the legal age is 18.

Think-25: Same as Challenge 25

PASS Card: A Proof of Age Standards Scheme card issued by the national PASS scheme, providing a standardised and recognised form of identification.

Compliance Audit: A systematic examination of business processes and operations to ensure adherence to legal and regulatory requirements, such as age verification policies.

Internal Compliance Assurance: A commitment to maintaining compliance through internal processes, often involving trained internal staff to conduct audits and assessments.

Serve Legal Audits: Specialised compliance audits conducted by Serve Legal, where auditors, often aged 18 or 19, test businesses' age verification processes and overall compliance.

Continuous Improvement: A commitment to ongoing enhancement and refinement of processes to ensure they remain effective and compliant with changing regulations.

Responsible Gambling Audits: Audits conducted by Serve Legal to assess the effectiveness of current responsible gambling measures, ensuring operators adhere to best practices.

By decoding these terms, businesses can navigate the compliance landscape with confidence, contributing to a more secure and responsible operational framework.

ADAPTING TO A WORLD WITH DIGITAL ID

As technology evolves, it is crucial for retailers and businesses to be well-informed about the realities of Digital ID. This knowledge is essential for implementing proper due diligence processes before its widespread adoption.

The Risks Around Digital ID

Digital IDs (DID) are an emerging form of identification, which since 2023 and the creation of the PASS 5:2023 'Requirements for Digital Presentation of Proof of Age' scheme could be accepted as proof of age for use in age-restricted purchases.

However, there are limitations on this as although DIDs can be used for lottery, tobacco, vapes etc. under the UK alcohol licensing act (as it currently stands), it can't be used for purchasing alcohol.

There are also a couple of other nuances that staff must be aware of to ensure its legitimacy, such as ensuring that the PASS hologram logo is moving and how to validate the DID. With multiple different providers of DID, it's imperative that staff members know how to identify legitimate proof of age.

How Serve Legal Can Help

As a retailer, using our young cohort of auditors, we can test your staff members' approach to DIDs in line with your company policy. Such as ensuring that they are correctly rejecting the ID's in the case of alcohol, and interacting with the DID appropriately to validate its legitimacy.

As a provider of Digital IDs, we can provide you with key feedback, such as how widely accepted your ID is and provide user experience feedback from both the onboarding process as well as till point interactions between customers and staff members.

This can also demonstrate your proactive approach to ensuring your ID is correctly validated and commitment to ensuring that age-restricted products are correctly gated.

EFFECTIVENESS AND CHALLENGES OF AGE VERIFICATION TECHNOLOGIES

The integration of Digital ID and Facial Biometrics has emerged as a ground-breaking technological duo, revolutionising various aspects of identity verification, security, and user experiences. While these technologies offer a promising solution to enhance compliance, they also pose unique challenges. Below is an exploration of the effectiveness and challenges associated with age verification technologies.

Digital ID: a secure and electronic representation of an individual's identity. It encompasses personal information, credentials, and attributes stored in a digital format, often linked to a unique identifier. Digital ID enhances user convenience by reducing the need for physical documents. It allows individuals to access services, make transactions, and prove their identity seamlessly, often through mobile applications.

Facial Biometrics: a biometric technology that identifies and verifies individuals based on unique facial features. It analyses facial geometry, including the distances between eyes, nose, and mouth. Facial biometrics offer a more hygienic, user friendly contactless and non-intrusive method of identity verification. Individuals can often verify their identity simply by looking at a camera, eliminating the need for physical tokens or passwords.

Challenges and Considerations

Privacy Concerns and Data Protection: The collection and storage of facial biometric data raises privacy concerns. Robust data protection measures, compliance with regulations, and transparent privacy policies are essential.

Bias and Fairness: Facial recognition algorithms can be subject to bias, impacting certain demographic groups more than others. Ongoing efforts are made to address biases and ensure fairness in algorithmic decision-making.

Unconscious Bias in Facial Recognition

While facial recognition technology offers tremendous potential benefits, addressing unconscious bias is a critical step toward realising its full potential in a fair and ethical manner. Developers, organisations, and regulatory bodies must collaboratively work to ensure that these systems prioritise accuracy, transparency, and equality, fostering a future where facial recognition is a tool for inclusivity rather than a source of bias.

HOW TO PASS A SERVE LEGAL AUDIT

Age Verification Audit

Understand Laws and Regulations

Research and understand the specific age verification laws and regulations relevant to your industry and location. Stay informed about changes or updates to these regulations.

Implement Robust Age Verification Procedures

Establish clear and effective age verification procedures tailored to your industry. Utilise reliable age verification methods such as document checks, identity verification, and/or technological solutions.

Employee Training

Train employees thoroughly on age verification procedures and legal requirements. Regularly update employees on any changes in regulations and best practices.

Internal Audits

Conduct regular internal audits to ensure that age verification processes are consistently followed. Identify and address promptly any areas of weakness or non-compliance.

Document Compliance Processes

Maintain clear documentation of your age verification procedures and protocols and ensure that documentation is easily accessible.

Utilise Technology

Explore technology solutions that can enhance age verification accuracy and efficiency. Keep up to date with advancements in age verification technology and consider their applicability to your business.

Continuous Improvement

Embrace a culture of continuous improvement in age verification processes. Stay informed about industry best practices and incorporate relevant improvements into your procedures.

HOW TO PASS A SERVE LEGAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ALLERGEN AUDIT

Understanding the Allergen Audit Process

- 1. Front-of-House Awareness:** Train front-of-house employees to be vigilant and responsive to customer allergies. Emphasise the need for clear communication and empathy.
- 2. Allergen Information:** Ensure employees are well-versed in allergen information. Confirm that menus prominently display allergen information.
- 3. Train Employees:** Ensure all employees are well-trained in allergen awareness. Conduct regular training sessions to keep everyone updated.
- 4. Communication Protocols:** Implement effective communication channels between kitchen and service employees about ingredients and cross contamination. Encourage customers to share their allergen concerns.

Preparing for the Allergen Audit

- 5. Employee Training Verification:** Confirm front-of-house staff have undergone allergen awareness training. Review training records to ensure comprehensive coverage.
- 6. Allergen Communication:** Ensure visible signage indicating the availability of allergen information. Confirm that employees can effectively communicate allergen details to customers.
- 7. Customer Interaction Protocols:** Reinforce protocols for dealing with customers with allergies. Ensure employees are familiar with procedures for accommodating allergy-related requests.

During the Allergen Audit

- 8. Handling Allergy Enquiries:** Observe employees' responses to simulated allergy enquiries. Assess how effectively employees communicate allergen information to the customer.
- 9. Confirming Allergen Information:** Evaluate employees' ability to confirm allergen details with accuracy. Assess whether employees proactively seek additional information to address customer concerns.
- 10. Empathy and Assistance:** Assess employees' level of empathy and willingness to assist customers with allergies. Observe if employees offer suitable alternatives or accommodations of needs when necessary.

HOW TO PROTECT REVENUE

Safeguarding Revenue Through Compliance and Serve Legal Audits

Compliance with industry regulations plays a pivotal role in safeguarding revenue and maintaining a positive reputation. An integral aspect of this strategy involves incorporating comprehensive audits, such as those offered by Serve Legal, into your business framework.

Understanding the Role of Compliance in Revenue Protection

Risk Mitigation: Compliance ensures adherence to legal and industry standards, mitigating the risk of fines, legal actions, and reputational damage. Serve Legal's audits specifically target areas prone to risks, offering a proactive approach to safeguarding revenue.

Enhanced Customer Trust: Compliance signals a commitment to integrity and ethical business practices. This builds trust amongst customers, fostering loyalty and repeat business. Serve Legal's audits, focused on customer experience and regulatory adherence, contribute significantly to reinforcing this trust.

Avoidance of Penalties: Non-compliance can result in substantial penalties and fines. By aligning with industry regulations and leveraging audits like those provided by Serve Legal, businesses can avoid financial setbacks which will protect their revenue streams.

Serve Legal Audits: Elevating Revenue Protection Strategies

Serve Legal's Revenue Protection Audits provide a robust, independent tool to test operational compliance. They can identify potential vulnerabilities, and also empower you to address and rectify issues before they impact your revenue. Our programmes cover three key areas of shop-floor compliance:

1. Staffed Till Compliance: This audit analyses the correct scanning of items by employees, ensuring customers are accurately charged. Measurements may include checks for trolley items at the till not loaded onto the belt and the accurate scanning of loose items packed together, such as in bakery or vegetable bags.

2. Self Check Out Compliance: This audit is geared towards preventing customers from obtaining items without proper payment. Assessments may include monitoring if employees adequately oversee customers weighing loose items and ensuring that every item leaving the store has been correctly scanned by the customer.

3. Absent Customer Audit: This audit focuses on the safe delivery of orders when customers are not in to accept them. It ensures that customers still receive products even if they miss their delivery slot, emphasising the continued satisfaction of your customer base.



Businesses often encounter real-world challenges linked to age verification compliance that demand practical solutions.

Challenge 1: Inadequate Training of Employees

Invest in Comprehensive Training: Ensure your employees undergo thorough training on age verification procedures. Equip them with the knowledge to confidently and accurately verify customer ages, emphasising the importance of compliance with legal requirements.

Regular Refresher Courses: Conduct periodic training sessions to refresh employee knowledge and keep them updated on changes in age verification laws or company policies.

Challenge 2: Handling Refusals and Customer Pushback

Clear Communication: Train employees to communicate age verification policies clearly and respectfully. Provide them with scripts or guidelines on handling refusals, emphasising the importance of adhering to legal requirements.

Offer Alternatives: When customers face refusals, you should have alternative solutions in place, such as providing contact information for customer support or offering guidance on obtaining the required identification.

Challenge 3: Handling Refusals and Customer Pushback

Regular System Checks: Implement regular checks on age verification technology to identify and address any potential glitches. Proactively monitor system performance to minimize the risk of technical failures.

Fallback Procedures: Establish fallback procedures for situations where technology may fail. This could include manual verification processes or alternative methods to ensure compliance.

Challenge 4: Changes in the Regulatory Landscape

Stay Informed: Regularly monitor and stay informed about changes in age verification regulations. Subscribe to relevant industry updates, participate in training programmes, and engage with regulatory bodies to ensure compliance.

Adaptability: Build adaptability into your age verification processes. Have mechanisms in place to quickly incorporate changes in regulations into your operational procedures.

Challenge 5: Privacy Concerns and Data Security

Implement Robust Data Security Measures: Prioritise data security in your age verification processes. Implement encryption, secure storage, and access controls to protect customer information.

Transparent Privacy Policies: Communicate clearly with customers about how their data will be used and stored. Maintain transparent privacy policies and ensure compliance with data protection regulations.

Successfully navigating age verification compliance challenges requires a proactive and strategic approach. By investing in employee training, leveraging technology wisely, staying informed about regulatory changes, and prioritising customer communication, businesses can not only address challenges but also build a robust age verification framework that aligns with legal requirements and

WHAT MAKES A LEGITIMATE ID? WHO SHOULD I BE 'ID'ING?

Employees must be well-versed in identifying legitimate forms of identification to comply with age verification requirements. Below is a comprehensive overview:

Accepted Forms of ID:

Valid Passport

Driving Licence

PASS Card: A nationally recognised proof of age card with a photo and hologram.

Key Features to Verify:

Photo Quality: Ensure the photo is clear and resembles the person presenting the ID.

Date of Birth: Check this to confirm the customer's age.

Expiry Date: Verify that the ID hasn't expired.

Security Features:

Holograms: Genuine IDs often include holographic features.

Watermarks: Legitimate IDs may have watermarks visible under light.

Raised Lettering: Some IDs have raised lettering for added security.

Who Should You be IDing?

Challenge 25 Policy: Anyone who appears to be under 25 should be asked for ID. Even if the individual claims to be of legal age, verification is essential.

Serve Legal Age Verification Test Purchasing Audits

Serve Legal conducts age verification test purchasing audits to help businesses ensure compliance and responsible selling practices. These audits involve sending individuals aged 18 or 19 to attempt to purchase age-restricted items. The audits assess staff performance in verifying IDs and upholding age-related policies.

WHY COMPLIANCE MATTERS: SHAPING POSITIVE BRAND IMAGE AND CUSTOMER TRUST

Compliance is an essential element that shapes the perception of your brand and establishes trust with customers. Below is a comprehensive look at why compliance matters in fostering a positive brand image and cultivating customer trust.

Foundation of Trust: Compliance ensures your business operates within legal and ethical boundaries and forms the foundation of trust with customers who expect businesses to act responsibly and transparently.

Protecting Reputation: Adhering to compliance requirements minimises the risk of legal issues and regulatory penalties. By safeguarding against legal consequences, your brand preserves its reputation and avoids negative associations that can erode customer trust.

Social Accountability: Compliance demonstrates your commitment to social responsibility. Customers are increasingly conscious of businesses' impact on society, and adherence to regulations showcases your dedication to responsible business practices.

Reliability and Consistency: When customers experience a seamless and compliant service, it reinforces their trust in your brand, leading to positive perceptions and repeat business.

Market Leadership: A commitment to compliance positions your brand as a leader in the market and attracts customers who seek assurance in their choices.

Customer Loyalty: Compliance builds the foundation for long-term customer relationships, making customers more likely to remain loyal and advocate for your business within their networks.

Differentiation: Compliance can serve as a key differentiator in a competitive market. Brands that prioritise and showcase their commitment to compliance stand out, attracting customers who value integrity and responsible business practices.

Future-Proofing: Compliance is an ongoing process that allows your brand to adapt to changing regulations and standards. By staying ahead of compliance requirements, your brand is better positioned to navigate industry shifts and maintain customer trust.

By prioritising ethical practices, mitigating risks, and consistently meeting customer expectations, compliant businesses create a foundation for sustained success and positive brand perception.

WHY DOES SERVE LEGAL TEST THIS SITE?

Serve Legal provides more than just audits. Serve Legal provides internal compliance assurance that serves as an insurance policy against Police, Trading Standards and regulatory tests.

Why Does Serve Legal Audit Stores?

Specialised Compliance Audits:

Our primary focus is on compliance, ensuring that your business adheres to legal and internal standards. We conduct audits tailored to age verification, allergen management, and revenue protection, providing you with detailed insights and actionable recommendations.

Age Verification Expertise:

Age-restricted products require strict compliance. We specialise in age verification audits, sending auditors aged 18 or 19 to test your employees' ability to handle such situations responsibly.

Allergen Management Assessments:

Our audits cover front-of-house interactions related to allergen management, ensuring your team effectively handles customer enquiries and minimises risks associated with allergen-related incidents.

Revenue Protection Focus:

Serve Legal's revenue protection audits evaluate key aspects such as staffed till compliance, self-checkout procedures, and absent customer audits, contributing to the safeguarding of your revenue.

Safer Gambling Evaluations:

Our safer gambling audits focus on ensuring establishments adopt practices that promote a secure and responsible gambling environment for patrons.

Key Differentiators:

Serve Legal goes beyond traditional mystery shopping. Its focus is on essential compliance, and its audits serve as an insurance policy to protect your business against legal tests.

Serve Legal auditors are equipped with the knowledge to assess compliance in specific areas vital to your business operations.