



News Release

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Eden Prairie man charged with tax crimes

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Revenue announced that the Hennepin County Attorney’s Office recently charged Hani Hassan Kotifani with two tax-related felonies.

Mr. Kotifani is charged with one count of possession of untaxed tobacco products, and one count of purchasing tobacco from unlicensed sellers. The charges stem from a joint investigation between the Minnesota Department of Revenue and the Eden Prairie Police Department.

The complaint states that during a retail inspection of Mr. Kotifani’s business, Anderson Oil Marketing, Inc., Revenue officials located several tobacco products lacking Minnesota tobacco tax stamps. In addition, according to the complaint, the investigators determined that the invoices provided by Mr. Kotifani, indicated that he purchased from vendors who were not licensed tobacco distributors in Minnesota.

The complaint states that Mr. Kotifani and his company were in possession of 6,850 unstamped cigarettes and over \$1,900 in untaxed tobacco products. In addition, Mr. Kotifani and his business also purchased more than \$7,100 worth of tobacco from unlicensed sellers between June 2014 and December 2014, according to the complaint.

Each tax-related felony charge carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison, a \$10,000 fine, or both. Defendants are presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty.

This is just one example of the department’s ongoing efforts to uniformly enforce the state’s cigarette and tobacco laws.

For more information on the rules and laws for retailers selling tobacco products, [visit our webpage with information on tobacco taxes in Minnesota.](#)

Although most taxpayers comply with tax laws voluntarily, the Minnesota Department of Revenue takes enforcement action against noncompliant taxpayers to ensure that tax laws are administered fairly.

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The Minnesota Department of Revenue has a 24-hour tip line for anyone who suspects that a person or business is violating Minnesota tax laws. Local callers may dial 651-297-5195 or call toll-free by dialing 1-800-657-3500. Tips can also be submitted to the department via email at tax.fraud@state.mn.us. Tipsters may choose to remain anonymous. In 2014, 87 percent of the department's criminal case referrals came from citizen tips.

Get the latest news and updates from the Minnesota Department of Revenue by following the department on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) or by signing up for our [email subscription list](#).

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