

News Release

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Blaine man charged with tobacco-related tax crimes

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Revenue announced that the Kandiyohi County Attorney’s Office recently charged Hamzeh Nimer Wazwaz, of Blaine, with one gross misdemeanor count of possessing untaxed tobacco products, and one gross misdemeanor count of purchasing untaxed tobacco products from an unlicensed seller.

According to the complaint, Mr. Wazwaz owns a tobacco shop, Sally Tobacco, in Willmar, Minnesota. During a random inspection at this business, department investigators allegedly found and seized more than \$870 worth of untaxed tobacco products. According to the complaint, more than \$1,700 in tax should have been paid on those products. The complaint alleges that Mr. Wazwaz confessed to buying the tobacco products illegally through an unlicensed seller.

Each tax-related gross misdemeanor charge carries a maximum penalty of one year in jail, a \$3,000 fine, or both. Defendants are presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty.

This is an example of the department’s ongoing efforts to uniformly enforce the state’s cigarette and tobacco laws. For more information on the tax laws related to tobacco products in Minnesota, [visit our website](#).

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.

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.

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