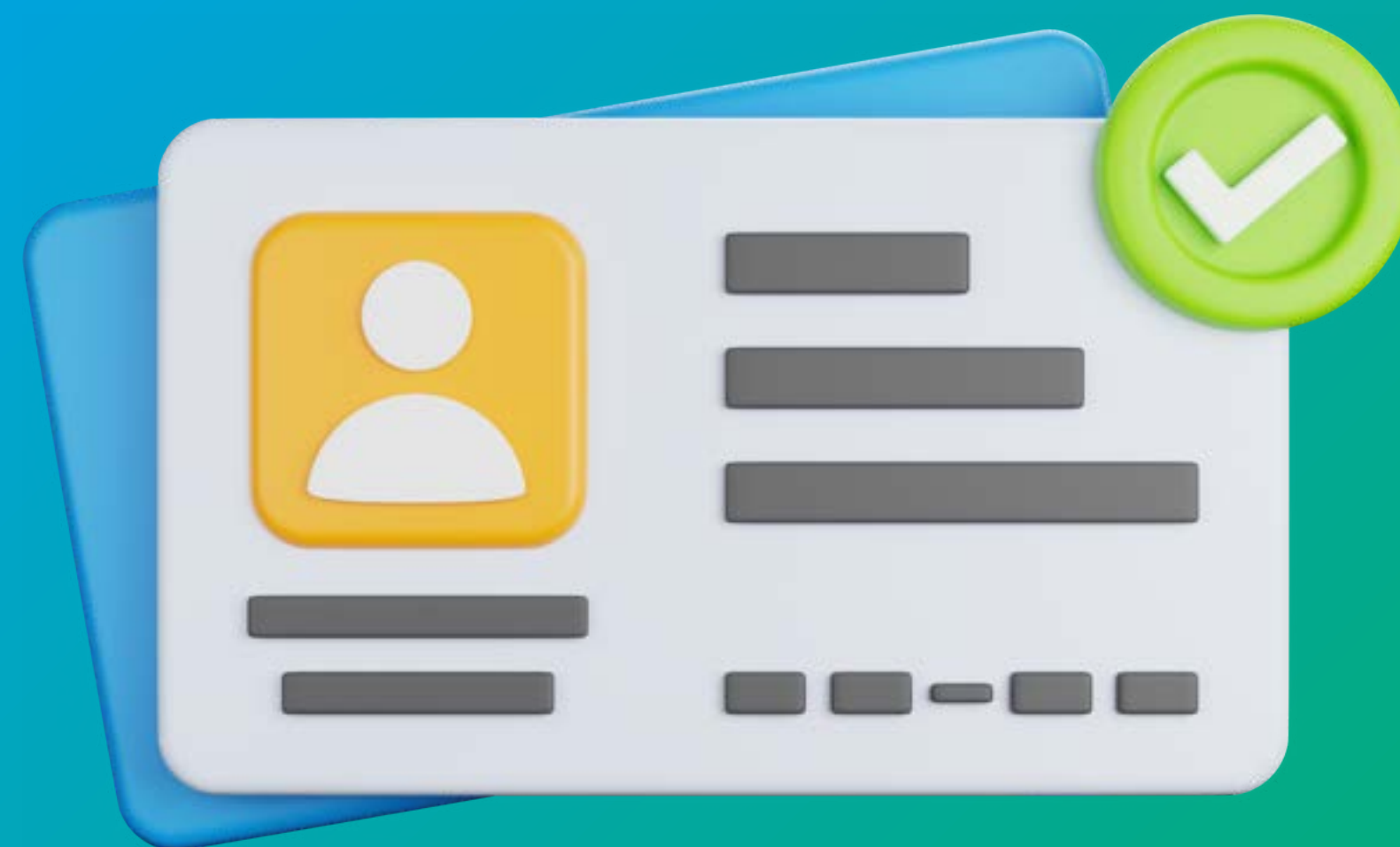
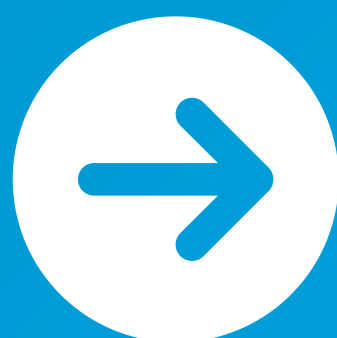


Protecting your Brand: Age Verification for Cigarettes and Tobacco Products

Rigorous age-verification for age-restricted products is essential for every convenience-store brand. To keep the industry on the leading edge of compliance, Intouch Insight conducts an annual mystery-shopping study—now in its third year—assessing real-world age-verification practices.

This study encompassed 32 brands and involved 276 covert visits to evaluate age verification practices in US convenience stores.






Why is this important?

Upholding strong tobacco age compliance is essential for multiple reasons. To begin with, it safeguards businesses from serious legal penalties that can result from failing to verify age properly. Beyond avoiding fines or legal trouble, a rigorous approach to age verification strengthens a brand's reputation and builds confidence among customers and regulators alike.

Moreover, well-designed compliance programs help streamline operations by reducing the likelihood of costly violations or forced closures. In the bigger picture, investing in robust compliance practices ensures the business remains sustainable over time and supports a retail environment committed to responsible sales.





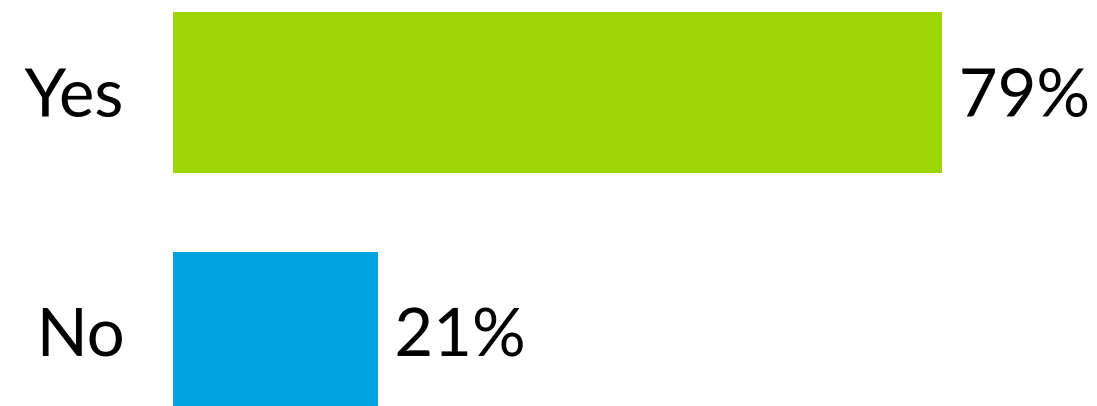
Age was *verified*
using 3 key steps
in *67% of visits.*

Three key steps were: (1) The employee requests ID, (2) Does so before payment, and (3) visually inspects the ID.



STEP 1

Did a store employee request your ID when you asked to purchase a tobacco product, or at any other point during the visit?

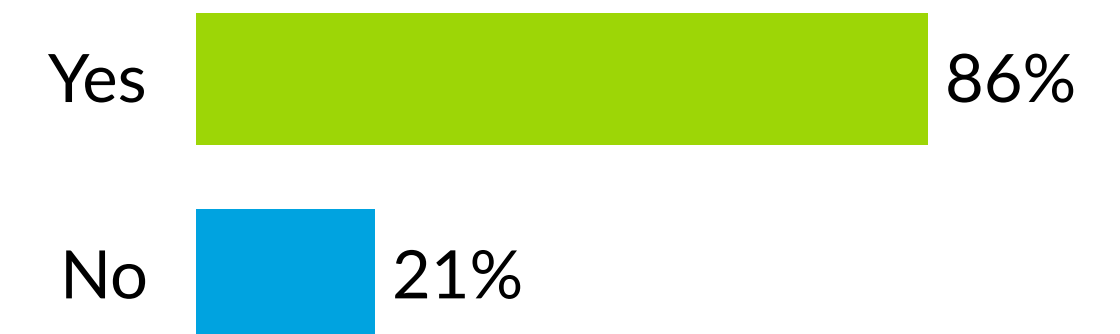
**STEP 2**

At what point did the employee ask for your ID?

99%
BEFORE payment

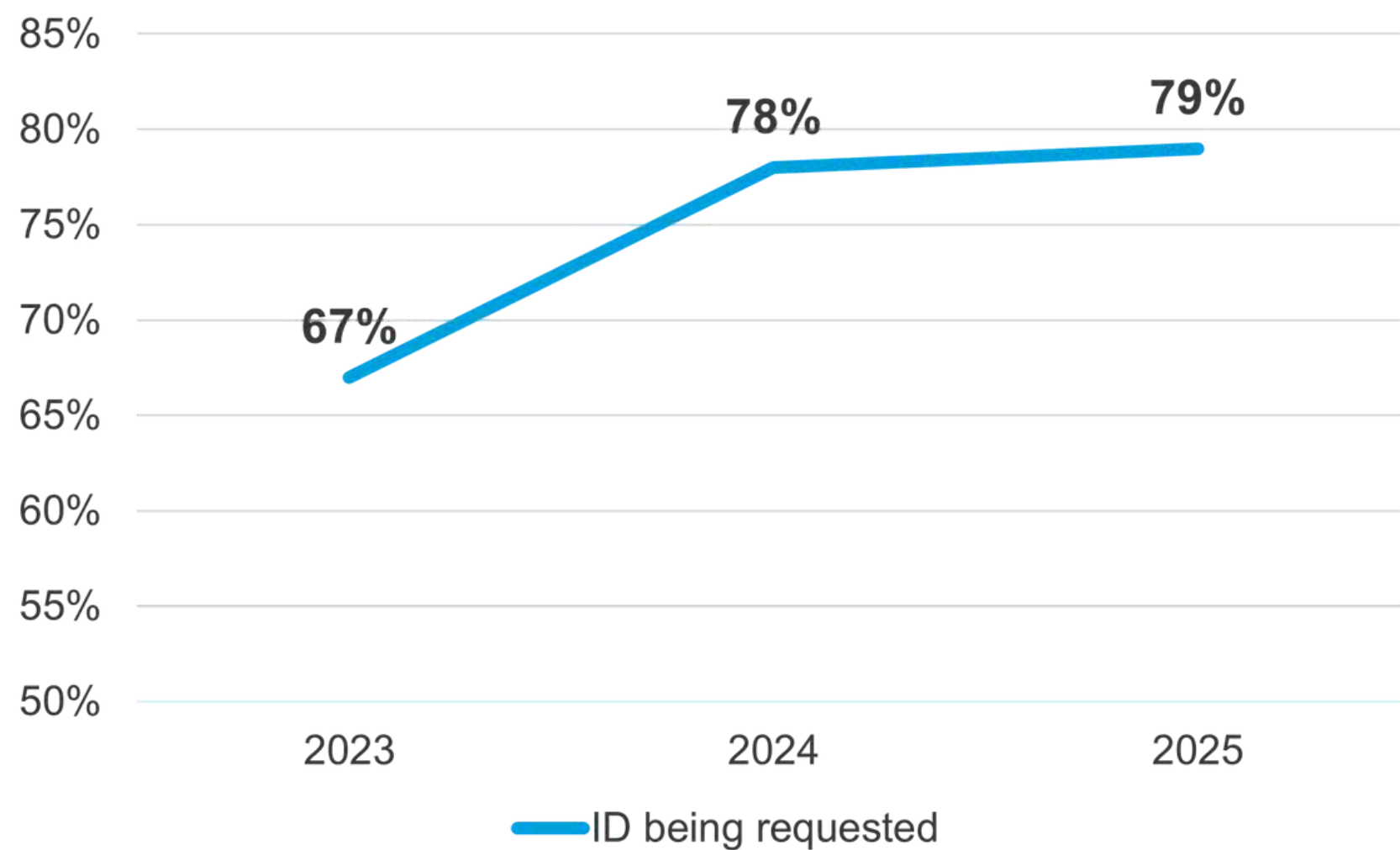
STEP 3

Did the employee visually inspect your photo ID?




While ID was requested in 79% of visits, that still means in over 1 in 5 cases, tobacco was sold without ID being requested.

Over the last 3 years, we have seen an increase in *IDs being requested*.



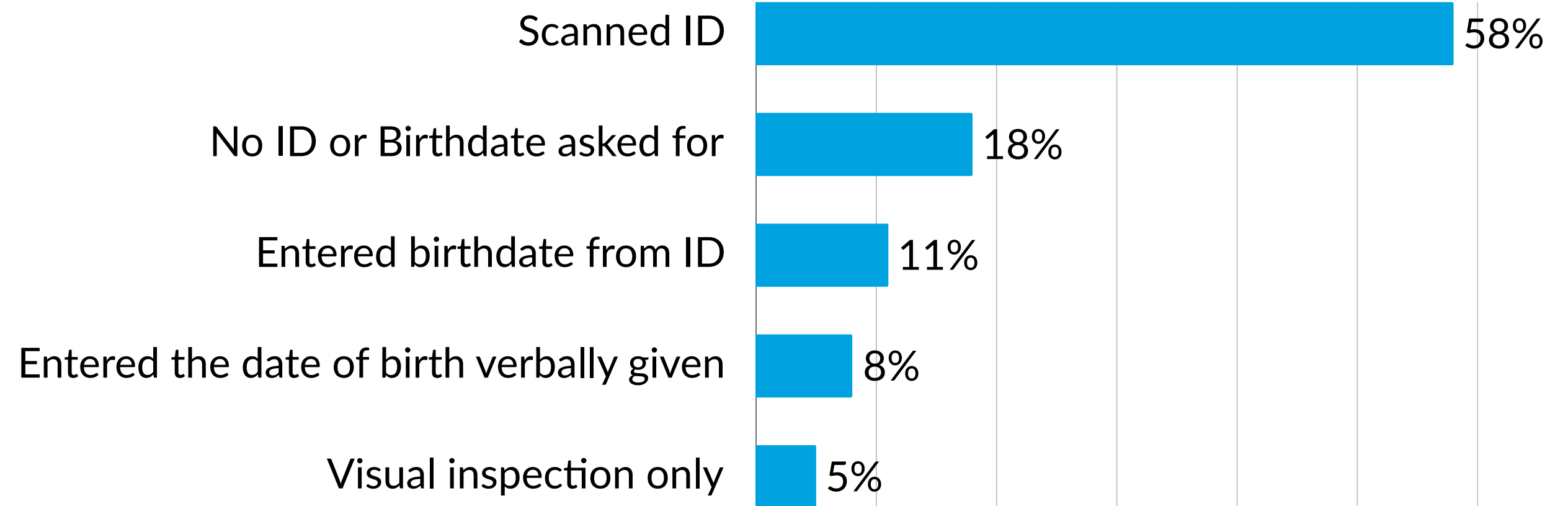
In some cases, employees try to bypass the system all together...



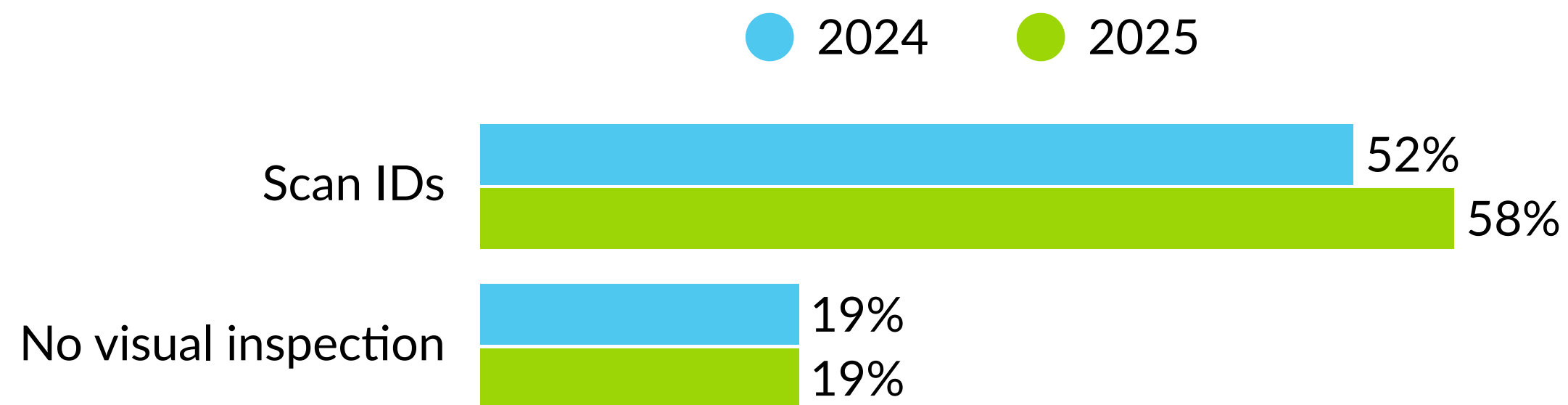
"The cashier did not request my ID or date of birth. He scanned a card he had before I paid." - Mystery Shopper

How are employees verifying age?

Compared to 2024,
Scanned ID's have
increased 6% from
52% to 58%.



Scanning is up, but visual checks aren't.

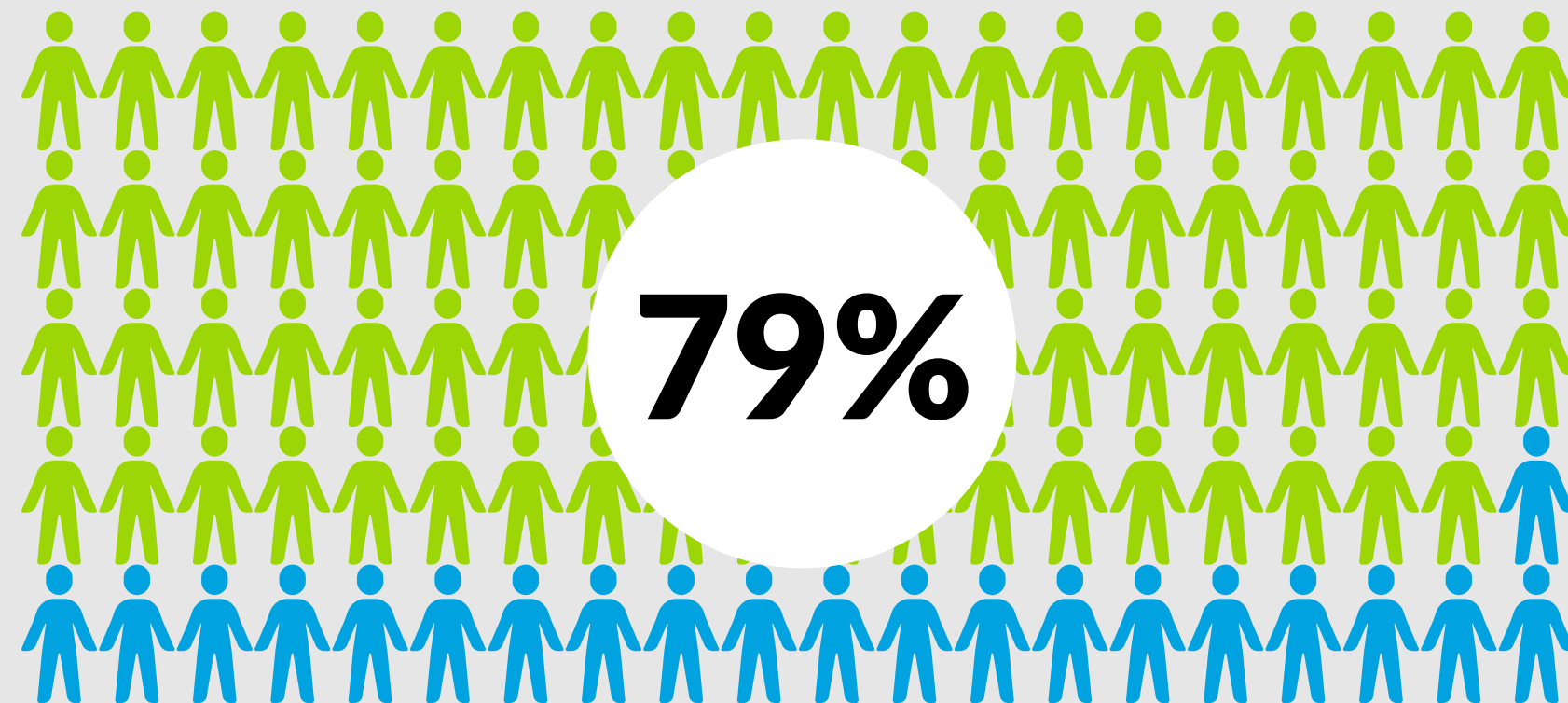


Despite a 6% increase in ID scanning, 19% of employees are scanning the ID without checking that the ID photo matches the customer.

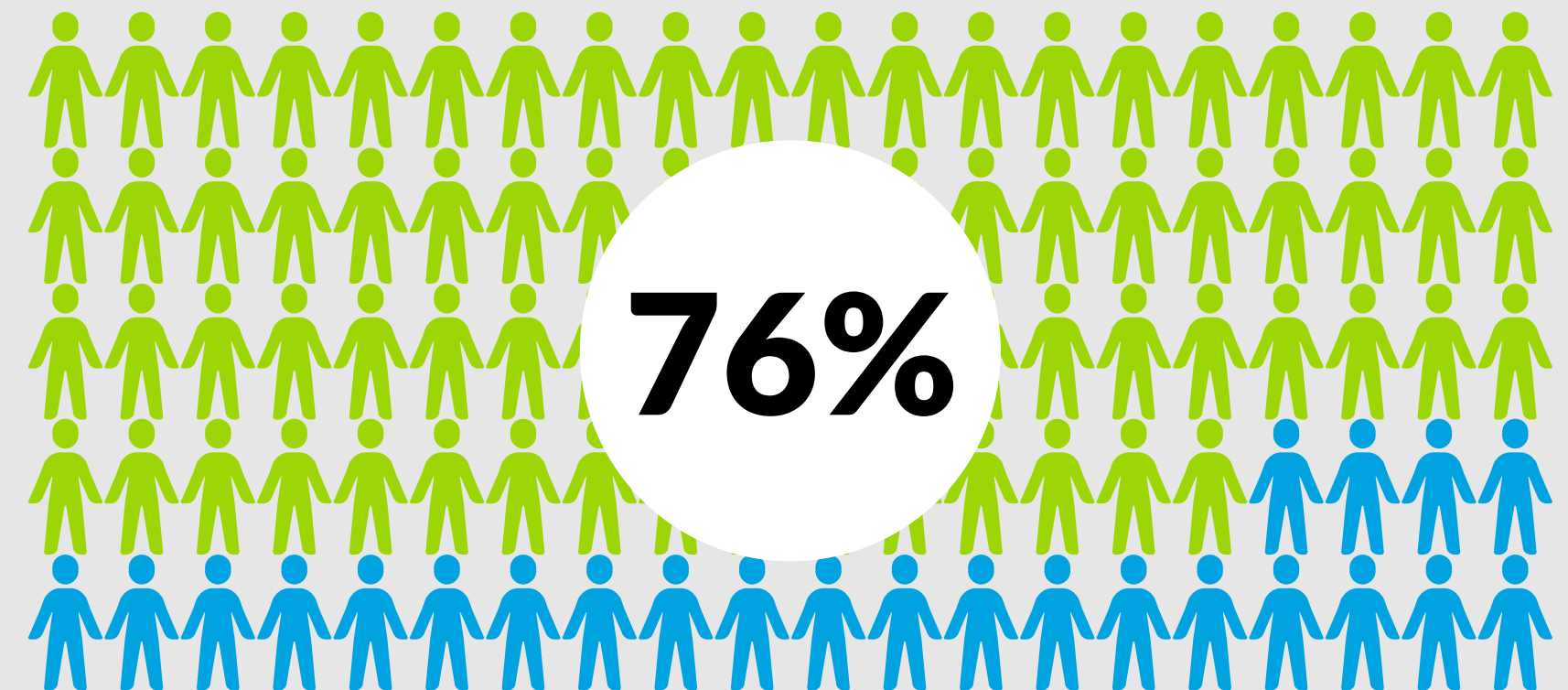


More 21–22-year-olds are being carded in 2025,
up 7 points from last year. However, older ages are
being carded less.

Ages 21 - 22



Ages 23 - 26



National vs. Regional Brands

	National Brands		Regional Brands	
	2024	2025	2024	2025
Was your ID requested?	72%	78%	82%	79%
Was your ID scanned?	46%	55%	60%	62%
Was your ID visually inspected?	84%	86%	88%	86%

There was only a *slight difference by gender.*



	Female	Male
Was your ID requested?	78%	79%
Was your ID scanned?	59%	62%
Was your ID visually inspected?	84%	88%

Evenings had the *lowest visual inspection* score by 6%

EARLY MORNING

100%

1:00am to 6:59am

MORNING

85%

7:00am to 12:59pm

AFTERNOON

88%

1:00pm to 6:59pm

EVENING

79%

7:00pm to 12:59am

82% of locations had “we ID”
signage at the *point of entry*.

National Brands: 83% Regional Brands: 79%

↑ Increased 4%
from 2024

76% of locations had “we ID” signage
at the *point of purchase*.

National Brands: 78% Regional Brands: 73%

↑ Increased 11%
from 2024

57% of locations had *other signage*
regarding selling to minors.

National Brands: 53% Regional Brands: 62%





About *Intouch Insight*

At Intouch Insight, we specialize in helping multi-location brands achieve operational excellence, exceed customer expectations, and build long-term customer loyalty, and we are proud to deliver growth solutions to over 300 of the world's most beloved brands.

Our solutions are designed to streamline operations, maintain brand standards, and provide actionable insights to help our clients enhance their CX. With over 40 years of CX expertise, we excel in providing our clients with top-notch CX, customer surveys, mobile forms, mystery shopping, as well as operational and compliance audit solutions.

Contact our team today!

letschat@intouchinsight.com
1-800-263-2980

[Find out more](#)

