



The Age of Majority

“The age of majority is 18 years”

*Annotated Code of Maryland, General Provisions,
Section 1-401*

The provision of law cited above from the Annotated Code of Maryland appears to define adulthood in a very clear manner. But does it? While the threshold age of 18 applies to most purposes in Maryland, there are some interesting exceptions.

See if you know how old a person has to be to do each of the following in Maryland:

1. Be elected to the House of Delegates
2. Be elected to the Senate
3. Hold a job
4. Buy cigarettes
5. Give blood
6. Be elected Governor
7. Register to vote
8. Make a will
9. Be a cosmetologist
10. Be a private detective

(See answers on reverse side)

Answers:

1. 21
2. 25
3. 14, but not during school hours or for night or hazardous work (16), and work permits are needed
4. 18
5. 17* (without parental permission)
6. 30
7. 16 (but you cannot vote until at least 18 years of age)
8. 18
9. 17
10. 25

*There are allowances for special circumstances.

You should note that, while the answers to these questions appear above, no explanations are presented as to why these ages were deemed necessary for each of the listed endeavors. The intentions or reasons behind these laws, as with all State laws, are essential ingredients of democracy in action. Do you know how to find out why a law has passed?



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