

ash.facts at a glance

action on smoking and health

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Tobacco regulation

Protection of children

Since 1 October 2007 it has been illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18 (previously 16). A ban on sales of tobacco from vending machines to reduce youth access is due to enter into force in 2011.

Tobacco advertising

All forms of tobacco advertising and promotion are banned in the UK with the exception of limited advertising at the point of sale. This will end when a ban on the display of tobacco products in shops enters into force from October 2011. Small shops will have until 2013 to comply with the law.

Consumer protection

All cigarette packs sold in the UK are required to include health warnings covering 30% of the front surface and 40% of the back.

The European Tobacco Products Directive allows member states to add picture warnings on tobacco products, subject to approval by the European Commission. **The UK government introduced picture warnings on cigarette packs in October 2008. Picture warnings on other tobacco products will need to be in place by October 2010.**

The EU Tobacco Products Directive, effective since 2002, sets a maximum upper limit of tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide for cigarettes sold in the European Union. The directive also bans such words as 'light' or 'mild' as part of a brand name, unless authorised by Member States.

Smoking in public places and workplaces

Smoking in virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces is now prohibited by law throughout the United Kingdom.

There are a few exemptions to the law. These include guest bedrooms in hotels and certain rooms in care homes, hospices and prisons.

Tax and smuggling

Rates of duty on tobacco products are determined by UK and European law. All tobacco products sold in the UK are required to have a 'UK Duty Paid' marking to help distinguish legitimate products from smuggled goods. Tobacco companies are required by law to ensure that their practices do not facilitate smuggling.

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)

The FCTC is the first global health treaty and was initiated by the World Health Organization.

The treaty seeks to set internationally agreed minimum standards on tobacco control and to ensure international co-operation on matters such as the illegal trade of tobacco.

For more information go to: www.fctc.org