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Premium

Authorities to come down on tobacco sale rules violators

Shopkeepers selling cigarettes, bidis, gutka and other tobacco products, and violating the point of sale rules of the Control of Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), should become alert now as Tobacco Control Officer, Chandigarh is all prepared to raid and issue challans against them.



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Shopkeepers selling cigarettes, bidis, gutka and other tobacco products, and violating the point of sale rules of the Control of Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), should become alert now as Tobacco Control Officer, Chandigarh is all prepared to raid and issue challans against them.

Dr Deepak Bakshi, Nodal Officer of Tobacco Control said, In the city, there have been rampant violations of Section 5 and 6 of COTPA rules. We are planning to raid such shops, but before taking the step we are thinking of spreading awareness about the COTPA rules. This is to avoid the excuse of lack of awareness on their part, while we challan them.

Section 5 of the COTPA prohibits any kind of advertisement, brand promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products. There is a ban on both direct and indirect advertisement or display of tobacco products in all forms of audio, visual and print media.

Dr Bakshi said, They are only allowed to use a board (45 cm x 30 cm) with information of availability of cigarettes and bidis at the shop, they cannot promote brand names. Further, the law mandates that the owner of the point of sale should prominently display a board of the same size with written and pictorial warning against the use of tobacco.

He added that the violation of Section 5 includes the presence of hoardings advertising tobacco products, larger than prescribed (60cm x 45 cm) at the point of sale, and more than two boards at one point of sale. One cannot use illuminated or back-lit boards and cannot display tobacco products in the open.

Violation of Section 5 of COTPA attracts imprisonment for a period extending up to two years or with a fine up to Rs 1,000, on second and subsequent conviction there will be an imprisonment up to 5 years and with a fine up to Rs 5,000.

Dr Bakshi said, Section 6 B of the COTPA mandates the display of a board banning the sale of tobacco to people below the age of 18 years. There is a fine of up to Rs 200 each time the person is caught selling tobacco to a minor.

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Talking about the achievements in making the city smoke-free, he added, According to the Global Adult Tobacco India Survey (GATS) India survey, in the overall category of adult exposure to second-hand smoke, it is found that [Chandigarh](#) (15%) has the lowest level of second hand smoke (SHS).

There is a fine of Rs 200 for those who are caught while smoking in public areas. They have to deposit the fine on the spot or the notice is issued to them and they have to appear before the SDMs court, he said.

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Last year, a total of 595 cases were registered and a fine of Rs 1,13,000 was collected. This year, only 46 people have been fined and the total amount of collected fine is Rs 8,800.

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