

Tobacco products to get new pictorial warnings



The government of India has been making continual efforts to spread awareness about the ill effects of consuming tobacco and tobacco products on human health. Taking it to grass-root level, the government has initiated a measure to show pictorial warning on tobacco products starting from September 1st.

The Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry has issued enhanced pictorial warnings which will essentially be needed to print on packets of cigarette and other tobacco products. Until now, there was only a statutory warning shown in text format on packets of cigarette giving a warning to smokers about the ill-effects of smoking. Updating the warning with pictures, the new warnings will highlight the ill-effects of tobacco consumption in picture format to restrict tobacco eaters from consuming it. The new pictorial warnings can be found on tobacco products starting from September 1, 2018.

In fact, the government has released two separate set of images. Out of the two, the first set will be used on tobacco products from September 1, 2018, for a period of 12 months. Thereafter, the second set of images will be used on tobacco products for the next 12 months. "The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India has notified new sets of specified health warnings for all tobacco product packs by making an amendment in the Cigarettes and other tobacco products (Packaging and Labeling) Rules and Cigarettes and other tobacco products (Packaging and Labeling) Second Amendment Rules, 2018, the statement said.

The statement has stated that, "Any person engaged directly or indirectly in the production, supply, import or distribution of cigarettes or any tobacco products shall ensure that all tobacco product packages shall have the specified health warnings exactly as prescribed." Furthermore, the statement has also clarified that violation of the provision will be considered as a punishable offence with imprisonment or fine as prescribed in Section 20 of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003.