

Smokescreen over cigarette branding in shops

Changes to point of sale for tobacco, May 2017 – what you need to know

For those businesses which manufacture and sell tobacco products the regulatory regime continues to bear down on the industry in order to persuade consumers to kick the habit and prevent take up in the first place.

The latest legislation arises out of the EU Tobacco Products Directive which imposes:

- Standardised plain packaging for all tobacco products
- The use of a uniform colour (matt green)
- Standardised sizing, fonts and text
- Strict prohibition against the use of logos
- Larger health warnings and the use of graphic pictures and text should take up 65% of the front and back of boxes
- The brand variant permitted only in standard format

A whole raft of products are banned outright and E-cigarettes are subject to new regulations.

The legislation has been in force from May 2016 but becomes compulsory from May 2017, with no sales of non-compliant stock permitted from 21 May 2017. Local trading standards will be responsible for enforcement. Making sure you are prepared for the changes will be key to the continued sale of products, as the new legislation is integral to the UK Government's attack on smoking.

Legal challenges of the legislation by the world's biggest tobacco firms failed. The reality is that had the legal challenges been allowed to succeed it would have been completely counter to public policy interests, which in the case of smoking must be allowed to prevail.

Notwithstanding the solid health and economic grounds for the changes, ensuring staff can easily identify the correct brand at point of sale, and also for returning stock, will be important. The use of an alphabetical or numbering system on shelving may help, but the suggestion from some corners of Trading Standards is that such systems will not be acceptable.



For detailed advice on the Tobacco & Related Products Regulations 2016, please contact:

sector colour

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