



Strengthened Health Warnings on Tobacco Packaging: New Rules Effective June 2025

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On December 3, 2024, the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** in India introduced the **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Amendment Rules, 2024**. These rules introduce new health warnings on tobacco packaging to enhance public awareness of the severe health risks posed by tobacco consumption. The new rules take effect from **June 1, 2025**. This article outlines the amendments, provides context for their introduction, and concludes with the expected outcomes of these regulations.

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Context: The Need for Stricter Tobacco Warnings

Tobacco consumption continues to be one of the leading causes of preventable diseases and deaths globally. In India, tobacco-related illnesses claim over a million lives annually, with many more suffering from chronic health conditions like cancer, heart disease, and respiratory disorders. Recognizing this public health crisis, the Indian government has consistently strengthened tobacco control measures under the **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 (COTPA)**.

The 2008 Packaging and Labelling Rules were introduced to mandate clear health warnings on tobacco products. Over time, as awareness campaigns revealed the need for even more impactful measures, amendments to these rules were made. The **2024 amendment** is the latest effort to increase the visibility and effectiveness of health warnings, aligning them with global best practices and further dissuading tobacco consumption.

Key Changes Introduced in the 2024 Amendment Rules

1. Extended Validity of Health Warnings

The amendment introduces a new sub-rule under Rule 5 of the **2008 Packaging and Labelling Rules**, ensuring uninterrupted implementation of health warnings. According to the new **sub-rule (3A)**, the health warnings specified for the second twelve-month cycle will remain valid until updated warnings are formally amended in the Schedule.

This provision ensures no lapse in compliance, maintaining the continuous visibility of health warnings on all tobacco products.

2. Revised Textual Health Warnings

The updated textual health warnings are designed to deliver stronger and clearer messages to consumers about the health risks of tobacco use:

- **Mandatory Warning Text:**
 - For both smoking and smokeless tobacco products, the warning will read:
 - **“TOBACCO CAUSES PAINFUL DEATH”**
 - This text will appear in **white font on a red background**.
 - Additional text encouraging cessation will read:
 - **“QUIT TODAY CALL 1800-11-2356”**
 - This text will appear in **white font on a black background**.
- **Colour Specifications:**
 - Background colors are standardized for maximum visibility:
 - White: C:0%, M:0%, Y:0%, K:0%
 - Red: C:0%, M:100%, Y:100%, K:0%
 - Black: C:0%, M:0%, Y:0%, K:100%

- **Font and Printing Requirements:**

- Text must be printed with a resolution of at least **300 DPI (dots per inch)**.
- The font type and colour must adhere strictly to as specified by the authorities, ensuring uniformity across all tobacco product packaging.

3. New Pictorial Health Warnings

The amendment mandates the inclusion of two new pictorial health warnings, displayed on tobacco product packaging in a phased manner. The first image shall be valid for the first **12 months** starting from June 1, 2025 and the second will replace the first image after its validity expires, remaining in effect for the subsequent 12 months.

These warnings are expected to visually reinforce the textual messages, making the dangers of tobacco consumption more evident. The government has made these images available for download on official websites, ensuring ease of compliance for manufacturers.

4. Accessibility of Health Warning Resources

To enable smooth implementation, the government has provided digital versions of all specified health warnings on its official platforms, including www.mohfw.gov.in and <https://ntcp.mohfw.gov.in>. This ensures that manufacturers, distributors, and stakeholders have access to accurate and standardized materials.

Implications of the Amendments

For Public Health

These measures aim to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use by:

1. **Raising Awareness:** The stronger textual and pictorial warnings provide clear, impactful messages about the severe health consequences of tobacco consumption, such as painful deaths and chronic diseases.
2. **Encouraging Quitting:** By prominently displaying a toll-free quitline number (1800-11-2356), the amendments make it easier for individuals to seek support and resources to quit tobacco.
3. **Protecting Vulnerable Groups:** The bold and visually striking warnings deter initiation, particularly among younger individuals, who are often targeted by the tobacco industry.

For the Tobacco Industry

The amendments place additional compliance responsibilities on manufacturers and distributors:

1. **Packaging Updates:** All tobacco product packaging must align with the new specifications by the deadline to avoid penalties.
2. **Standardization:** Strict adherence to font, colour, and resolution standards ensures consistency across all products, reducing the possibility of non-compliance.
3. **Cost Implications:** Updating packaging designs may involve additional costs, but these are outweighed by the broader public health benefits.

Global Context

India's updated rules align with global best practices recommended by the **World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)**. These changes reflect India's commitment to reducing tobacco consumption and its associated health and economic burdens.

Conclusion: Building a Healthier Future

The **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Amendment Rules, 2024**, represent a significant stride in India's fight against tobacco-related illnesses. By strengthening textual and pictorial health warnings, the government aims to increase awareness of the dangers of tobacco, encourage cessation, and deter new users. These measures align with global standards and reflect a firm commitment to safeguarding public health.

The visual warning and declaration being effective from **June 1, 2025**, the collective efforts of the government, manufacturers, and public health advocates will be critical in ensuring their successful implementation. While challenges remain, such as enforcing compliance and countering industry resistance, these amendments mark a crucial step toward a tobacco-free society.

The ultimate goal is to create a healthier, more informed population, reducing the burden of tobacco-related diseases and improving quality of life for millions of Indians.

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