

**EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY OF
MOH COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY DEBATE 2015**

HEALTHY LIVING EVERYDAY: TOBACCO CONTROL

Tobacco control is one of the public health priorities in Singapore. We adopt a multi-pronged, whole-of-government approach in addressing tobacco control.

The Ministry of Health (MOH), Health Promotion Board (HPB), and the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) work with partners in the public, private and people sectors on tobacco legislation and taxation, public education, as well as smoking cessation services.

Singapore studies and closely monitors tobacco control developments worldwide for new measures to address tobacco use. MOH will consider tobacco control measures shown to be effective. Any new tobacco control measure adopted by Singapore will be customised to our local context.

To this end, MOH is embarking on the new initiatives below:

Point of Sale Display (POSD) Ban

- MOH will be amending the Tobacco (Control of Advertisements and Sale) Act by end 2015 to introduce the point of sale display (POSD) ban. This was previously announced at MOH's Committee of Supply 2014. Tobacco retailers will be given 12 months after the new legislation is gazetted to comply with the POSD ban requirements.
- The ban on the display of tobacco products near the cashiers is to:
 - Protect non-smokers, especially youths, from the advertising and promotion of tobacco products through point of sale displays; and
 - Reduce the accessibility of tobacco products by removing them from the direct line of sight of the public. This will discourage impulse purchases and help smokers who are trying to quit.
- Point of sale display ban has been successfully introduced other countries, where a decline in youth smoking rates have been observed.

Public Consultation on Standardised Packaging

- A public consultation on the standardised packaging of tobacco products in Singapore will be conducted towards the end of 2015.
- Standardised packaging is also known as plain packaging. It refers to the:

- Removal of all promotional aspects of tobacco packaging (including trademarks, logos, colour schemes and imagery)
 - Standardisation of the packaging in terms of e.g. text font size, location of text, etc.
 - Mandatory health warnings will remain
- Its objectives are to:
 - Decrease the attractiveness and appeal of tobacco products to consumers and non-smokers, particularly youths
 - Increase the visibility and effectiveness of health warnings to warn consumers about the harms of smoking.
 - Currently, Australia is the only country to have implemented standardised packaging. It came into effect on 1 December 2012.
 - New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland, France and the United Kingdom have announced their intention to introduce standardised packaging.

Emerging Tobacco Products

- Shisha was the first emerging tobacco product to be banned in Singapore.
- Later this year, MOH will implement the pre-emptive measure of banning the import, distribution and sale of other emerging tobacco products, as a high and precautionary level of public health protection is needed against the known or potential harms of these products. This ban will:
 - Protect the public from health risks associated with the consumption of such products
 - Ensure that emerging tobacco products do not stimulate demand and become entrenched
 - Prevent emerging tobacco products from becoming ‘gateway’ or ‘starter’ products for non-smokers
- Most member states of the European Union (EU) have taken the lead to prohibit the sale of tobacco for oral use, such as snus and dissolvable tobacco.
- Australia has banned smokeless tobacco intended for oral use, and imposed strict regulations on the sale of nicotine.
- Norway and Uruguay have prohibited electronic cigarettes since 1989 and 2010 respectively.

ANNEX: BACKGROUND INFO

Harmful health effects of tobacco use

- Tobacco kills 1 in 2 of its users.¹
- Tobacco use can cause cancer, heart and lung diseases, and is the second most important cause of premature deaths and ill health in Singapore.

Daily cigarette smoking prevalence among Singapore residents aged 18–69 years

All adults (aged 18 – 69 years)	
All	13.3%
Males	23.1%
Females	3.8%

Source: National Health Surveillance Survey 2013

Singapore's efforts in tobacco control

- Singapore's first legislation on smoke-free public places was implemented in 1970.
- Singapore was the first Asian country to ban tobacco advertisements in 1971.
- In Aug 2004, Singapore became the first country in Asia to implement requirements for all tobacco packaging to bear graphic health warning labels, which includes both image and text, to caution smokers about the health effects of tobacco use.
- In 2009, Singapore became the first in the world to mandate compulsory labelling of all individual sticks of Singapore duty-paid cigarettes, to visibly differentiate duty-paid cigarettes from contraband ones.
- In Mar 2013, the ban on misleading descriptors on tobacco product packaging was introduced and the maximum permitted tar and nicotine yield levels were lowered. In addition, a new set of graphic health warnings labels was implemented to ensure they remain impactful.
- At Budget 2014, a 10% increase in excise duty for cigarettes was announced.
- With effect from 28 November 2014, shisha has been banned in Singapore via the publication of the Prohibited Tobacco Products Regulations made under Section 15 of the Tobacco (Control of Advertisements and Sale) Act, with a grace period for existing shisha importers and retailers.

¹ World Health Organization. Tobacco. Last accessed 2 March 2015:
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs339/en/>