

Oregon retailers face penalty if cigarettes aren't Fire-Safer™

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Cigarette retailers in Oregon received a final notice last week from the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to comply with Oregon's fire-safer cigarette law or risk civil penalties beginning March 1st. Oregon's fire-safer cigarette law, effective January 1, 2008, requires retailers to sell only fire-safer cigarettes. Since then, retailers in violation of the law have received warnings from the OSFM and given the choice of disposing of the illegal cigarettes or have them confiscated. On March 1st the warnings will end and civil penalties will begin.

"We're still seeing retailers with non-compliant cigarettes on their shelves," says OSFM License and Permit Manager Anita Phillips. "They've had plenty of time to remove these illegal cigarettes from their shelves and dispose of them or return them to their distributor." Governor Kulongoski signed the law in April 2007. Retailers had eight months, until December 31, 2007, to eliminate their current stock of non-fire safe cigarettes. To reduce financial impact to distributors, the Department of Revenue is allowing tobacco tax refunds for distributors receiving returns of non-compliant cigarettes from retailers. Fire-safer cigarettes, officially referred to as reduced ignition propensity or low ignition propensity cigarettes, are identified with the following markings near the universal product code (UPC):

- The marking FSC (the most common marking)
- A heavy black line above the UPC
- The letters FS, RIP or LIP near the UPC
- A diamond symbol or forward slash mark near the universal product code

Retailers may only sell cigarettes identified with a fire-safer marking located near the universal product code or on the cellophane wrapping on the pack or carton. Violators may be fined up to five times the retail value of the cigarettes involved or \$1,000, whichever is greater.

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