

## Must hide cigarettes behind counter \*

**Source:** Demokraten – December 15, 2009

From the beginning of this year you can buy but not see tobacco at kiosks, gas stations and grocery stores. "I doubt that this regulation will have any effect," said tobacco user Benedicte Gudjonsson.

Take a good look at Petterøe and Marlboro cigarette packs while you can. From the beginning of the year the non-healthy item must be camouflaged for both smokers and non-smokers. The Health Ministry's goal with the new regulations in the tobacco law is unambiguous: to get people to quit smoking for good.

Investing one million

14 days before the ban on displaying snus, roll your own, cigarettes, as well as rolling paper comes into force, shop owners are working hard to resolve the practical challenges.

"For our part, the regulations mean that we must cover our two tobacco shelves. Plastic covers with Velcro have therefore been obtained, which will be installed before Jan. 1"

"Others choose to be even stricter, investing in large card operated cigarette vending machines. Regardless, all who sell tobacco products must make hiding measures before the end of the year like authorities have decided," says Bodil Solgaard at Solgaard Food in Heibergsgate.

Her husband, Henning Solgaard adds: "You have to respect the decision from the country's central authorities. But you have to wonder what will come next."

Will tobacco, like strong beers have, end up in the government controlled wine monopoly outlets? "I fear the consequence will be that more tobacco is imported from Sweden," predicts Solgaard.

Lighters remain visible

The changes in the much discussed "smoking law" also means that the cigarette rolling paper must be covered. Lighters, however, will continue to be placed on store shelves.

"A lighter can be used for so many things - such as lighting up a fireplace. Cigarette paper, however, is only intended for rolling tobacco," says Bodil Solgaard as she points out the store's new case for cigarette rolling paper Rizla.

"Do you sell more tobacco in 2009 than when the family took over the Solgaard convenience store in Heibergsgate nearly 30 years ago?"

Henning Solgaard: "We certainly sell no less, to put it that way. We have so far always had great sales of tobacco, which I think has to do with that are a lot of industrial businesses in nearby Øra."

"What sanctions can shop owners who ignore the requirement to remain tobacco shelves expect?"

Solgaard: "I do not know the size of any fines. But the reactions are likely to be heavy, also from the respective distribution chains."

Going to Sweden

Benedicte Gudjonsson, one of store's customers is comfortable with having an occasional cigarette. To stop smoking just because cigarettes disappear from sight is not going to happen:

"I must admit that I usually buy my cigarettes in Sweden, and I will probably continue to do so. When you can no longer see the tobacco here, it is likely that smokers will buy cigarettes in Sweden even more than now."

"Do you think the government will achieve the desired effect; less tobacco consumption and more people who stop smoking?"

"I doubt whether this invisibility-requirement will have any effect. Smokers are not likely to become fewer after January 1 just because a box which says "tobacco" will be put behind the counter.

"What about younger people who take up smoking? Will the young people forget cigarettes when they can't see them in stores?"

"Perhaps authorities could be on to something here," says Benedicte Gudjonsson hesitantly.

**Link:** <http://www.demokraten.no/lokalnytt/article4759777.ece>

\* (English translation)