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Tobacco Products

Letter to Retailers on Tobacco Products Labeled or Advertised with the Descriptors "Light," "Low," "Mild," or Similar Descriptors

Food and Drug Administratio
Center for Tobacco Product
9200 Corporate Boulevard
Rockville MD 20850-322
June 17, 201

Dear Retailer:

On June 22, 2010, it will be illegal for manufacturers to manufacture for sale or distribution tobacco products labeled or advertised with the descriptors "light," "low," "mild," or similar descriptors, without an FDA order in effect that allows the product to be marketed (currently, FDA has issued no such orders). Beginning on July 22, 2010, it will be illegal for manufacturers to introduce these products into the marketplace of the United States. These new legal restrictions apply only to manufacturers; they do not prohibit retailers from selling tobacco products with the descriptors "light," "low," "mild," or similar descriptors that were manufactured before June 22, 2010. For more information, please see the guidance for industry and FDA staff titled, "Use of 'Light,' 'Mild,' 'Low,' or Similar Descriptors in the Label, Labeling, or Advertising of Tobacco Products" found at:

<http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/ucm214597.htm>¹.

While the law permits retailers to continue selling these products, FDA is concerned that keeping these products on the market for an extended period of time is not in the interest of public health. The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act restricts tobacco products labeled or advertised with the descriptors "light," "low," "mild," and similar descriptors because these descriptors have been shown to mislead consumers. Although many smokers who use "light" cigarettes believe that these products are less harmful and easier to quit, studies have shown that they present no less health risks than other cigarettes.

FDA hopes that you will help us in our effort to protect the public health. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Please feel free to contact us with questions, or if we can be of assistance to you in this effort.

Sincerely,

/s/

Lawrence R. Deyton, M.S.P.H., M.D.
Director, Center for Tobacco Products

Links on this page:

1. <http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/ucm214597.htm>