

Status of Pack Display Ban at Point of Sale in Thailand

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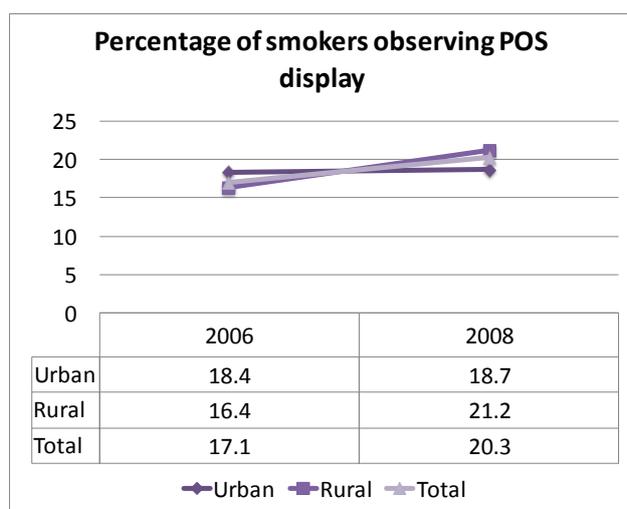
Thailand has implemented a ban on pack display at point of sale since September, 28, 2005. During the implementation, the tobacco companies used several counter action strategies against the proposed regulation. They immediately acquired interpretation of an article 8 of Tobacco product control act from the Juridical Council. Law professors appeared on several media channels questioning the validity and effectiveness of this regulation. They also distributed pamphlets to retail stores all over the country. The industry even offered to reduce display area to 1 pack per 1 brand. Seven Eleven, the biggest retail store franchise, and Tobacco Retailer Association also put up a big fight. However, tobacco control community in Thailand collaborated and worked together to educate the public and society about the importance of display ban. Finally, social pressure became a driving force to overcome the industry.



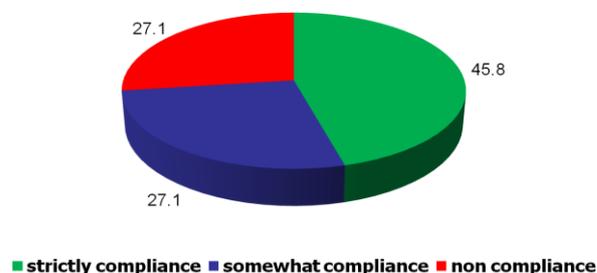
Photo1: cigarette shelf before and after POS Ban

Research study on POS Pack Display in Thailand

Soon after the ban, an observational study was conducted around Bangkok area which found that only half of the observed shops strictly or partially complied with the regulation¹. A year later (2006), an ITC study asked smokers whether they saw cigarette packs displayed at POS.² Seventeen percent said they have seen it at least once in the past month. In 2008, two years later, the same study reported about twenty percent. In 2010, a small observational study conducted around university campus found 38.7 percent non compliance.³ In 2012, a more recent study conducted in three provinces around lower northern region found 40.0-66.0% and 25.9-42.0% non compliance rate in metropolitan area and non metropolitan area respectively.⁴



Percentage of retail stores complied with the display ban: Outside Bangkok in 2005



Kitti Gunpai. Monitoring POS display ban in Thailand

¹ Kitti Gunpai. Monitoring POS display ban in Thailand, 2005

² Buppa Sirirasm, International Tobacco Control Policies Survey, 2006

³ Chakkapan Phetpoom and Piyarat Nimpitakpong, Retailer behavior of the sale of tobacco near university campus, 2010.

⁴ Tobacco Control Research Unit, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Naresuan university, 2012

Cigarette display areas

There are at least two types of display areas in Thailand. First, in convenient stores such as seven eleven or family mart, the built-in shelf with flip-cover is normally located behind cashier counter. Although most shops keep the cover closed at all times, some shops left them open all day giving the reason that the staff were too busy to shut them.

As for other small retail shops, the cigarette shelf are mostly provided free by the tobacco companies (see photo2 - 4). These shelves have been designed by the company which carries their product logo and colors. Some have a genius design that can be rotated around between cover and display. Some are just plain clear plastic in which people can easily see the cigarette packs inside. In rural areas, cigarette shelf or container can be made by retailers (see photo5). In several tourist places, tobacco companies sometimes create mobile shops selling cigarettes by sale girls, such as Philip Morris mobile shops in Pattaya (see photo6).



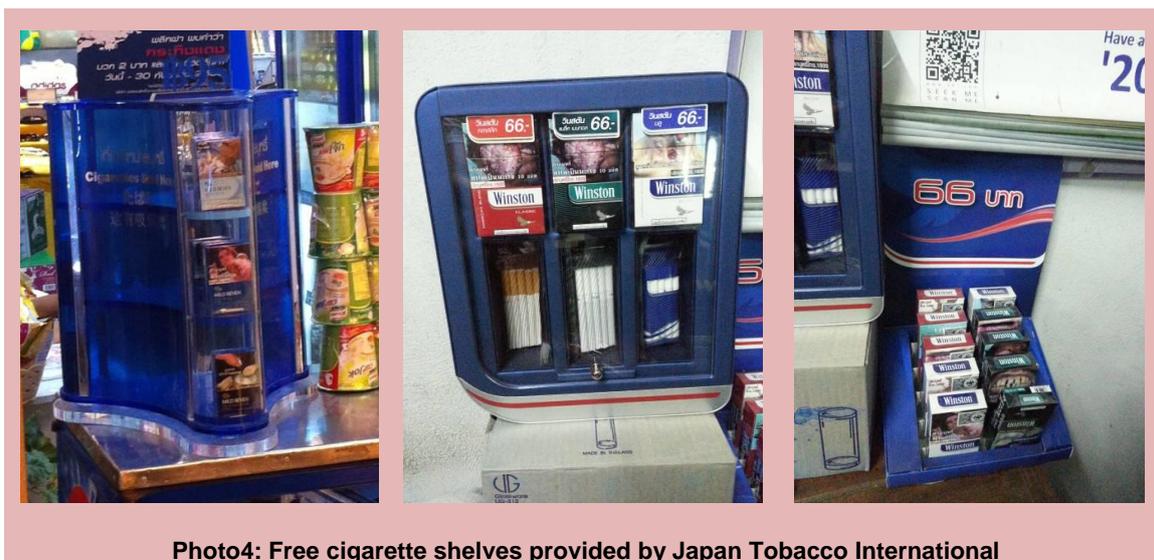


Photo4: Free cigarette shelves provided by Japan Tobacco International

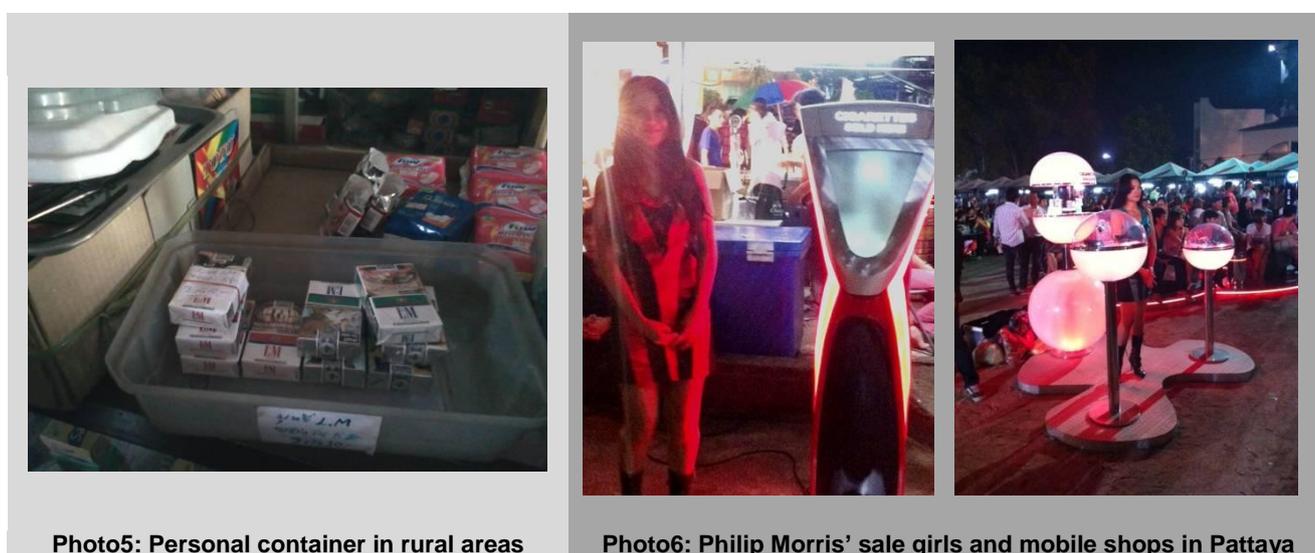


Photo5: Personal container in rural areas

Photo6: Philip Morris' sale girls and mobile shops in Pattaya

Illicit trade cigarettes

In Bangkok metropolitan areas and several tourist towns around the country, illicit cigarettes are displayed in plain view. All products are displayed on an easy to move table or simply on a colorful mat. There are 14 high risk places in Bangkok and surrounding areas⁵.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

1. Ministry of Health needs to step up the enforcement especially on POS display and illegal cigarette.
2. Tobacco companies are clearly circumventing the ban on pack display. The Ministry of Health should educate and inform shopkeepers about the law and impact on youth smoking of POS display.



Photo 7: Illicit trade cigarettes are displayed on colorful mat.

⁵ Research study, Dr. Srirach Loysmut Lapyai, 2014