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Cafes told to stop selling tobacco by Dec

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ABU DHABI - Cafes and restaurants in residential buildings and areas that are serving shisha and other type of tobacco products will have time until December to relocate or stop this service, or can face penalty.

Article 11 of the Federal Law on Tobacco Control No. 15, 2009 prohibits the licensing of “cafes or similar places which provides any types of tobacco or its products within residential buildings or area. Cafes or similar places shall settle their status within two years as of the date of this law by changing the activity or moving to another place.”

“By December 21, 2011, the law will be two years old, the grace period given to these entities will be over,” said Mohammed Jalal Al Reyaysa, Director of Communications and Community Service at the Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority (ADFCA).

Salim Adib, manager of Public Health and Research at HAAD, noted that the Municipality of Abu Dhabi City has already stopped issuing licences to cafes.

“But what should be done now is to get the cafes out of residential areas. Shisha places should be 150 metres away from residential areas,” he stressed.

“Hamdan and Khalifa streets (in particular) should be free and this should be indicated in the regulation,” he added. Abu Dhabi’s bylaws on the tobacco control law is expected to clarify ambiguities, and detail specifics. For instance, “In malls, it is still unclear how to make them smoke-free, especially in cafes and restaurants inside the mall that have licensed to sell cigarette. Smoking should not be allowed except in smoking designated areas,” Adib pointed out. Asked how the police will implement the smoking prohibition inside the car with a passenger under 12 years old, Captain Bahyan Al Ameri, Head of the Abu Dhabi Partnership Section at the Abu Dhabi Police said: “We are waiting for the bylaws because any penalty should be part of the traffic law.”

During Ramadan, which is expected to start on August 1, it is traditional to serve shisha at Ramadan tents. It remains unclear how Ramadan tents will be regulated.

As part of the ‘Abu Dhabi Says No to Smoking’ programme by the emirate, the health authority, in association with 10 other local authorities, is campaigning to stop men and women from smoking through catchy advertisements highlighting that smoking shisha and medwakh is not part of the Arab culture.

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