



Illegal
Tobacco



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Illegal Tobacco Safety Considerations

Why should I worry about tobacco safety?

Whilst it is an urban myth that all illegal tobacco contains rat droppings and / or floor sweepings. In reality we never know what contaminants are in illegal tobacco.

Genuine tobacco products are manufactured in accordance with strict quality control procedures, as the manufactures want all their products to be the same. However, over 5,000 different chemicals are released when a cigarette burns and there is clear evidence that smoking causes at least 15 different types of cancer.

To find out more from **Cancer Research UK** about the content of a cigarette, please [click here](#).

Counterfeit and other brands specifically manufactured for the illegal market – when tested, have shown levels of Tar and Carbon Monoxide to be in excess of permitted levels by more than 80%.

In our experience cigarettes and tobacco which are either counterfeit, or made for the illegal market are more likely **NOT** to adhere to safety standards or a standardised manufacturing processes. We do not know what conditions they are manufactured in, factories may be in a poor state of repair or they may even be manufactured /packed at a home address. This may present a greater risk for other contaminants to be present and in unknown quantities.

The safety features

Reduced Ignition Propensity (RIP) is a feature incorporated into cigarettes, which is designed to reduce the risk of house fires.

A Compliant Cigarette



This picture shows the inside of a cigarette paper rolled flat which does have RIP built in (we have used a blue highlighter pen to clearly show the special bands built into the paper).

Notice the breaks in the highlighted line?

This will ensure that the cigarette will self-extinguish when not continuously smoked. It must be noted that all lit tobacco items may pose a fire risk at the home, if not properly extinguished.

A Non-Compliant Cigarette



This picture shows the inside of a cigarette paper which does not have RIP built in.

Notice that there are NO breaks in the highlighted blue line? This cigarette will not self-extinguish if left unattended.

It is a legal requirement in the UK that all cigarettes must contain RIP. When a cigarette is lit it must self-extinguish if not continually smoked. This test has a high failure rate with counterfeit and other brands specifically manufactured for the illegal market. There have been several fatal house fires as a result of their consumption, as they fail to meet the standard. Also, all lit tobacco items pose a fire risk at the home, if not properly extinguished.



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