



Tobacco companies ordered to admit lying for decades about the health effects of smoking

Ads telling public the truth about tobacco industry's lethal products will run through 2018.

The tobacco industry has been deceiving the American people for decades by lying about the health effects of smoking and marketing to children. Now they have been ordered to publicly admit they lied in the form of newspaper ads published through March and television ads running through 2018.

This move dates back to 2006, when U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler found that tobacco companies had violated civil racketeering laws and defrauded people in America for decades. The major U.S. tobacco companies resisted admitting their deceptive practices publicly for more than 11 years. While the tobacco companies were fighting in the courts, nearly 80,000 Oregonians died from causes linked to tobacco.

In her 1,683-page decision, Judge Kessler detailed how the tobacco companies “have marketed and sold their lethal products with zeal, with deception, with a single-minded focus on their financial success, and without regard for the human tragedy or social costs that success exacted.” She concluded, “The evidence in this case clearly establishes that Defendants have not ceased engaging in unlawful activity.”

While the tobacco companies were fighting in the courts, nearly 80,000 Oregonians died from causes linked to tobacco.

The tobacco companies Lorillard Inc., Altria (owner of Philip Morris USA) and R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. were ordered to run ads for the entire year. The ads cover five topics:

» **The adverse health effects of smoking**

Example of ad copy tobacco companies are required to run verbatim: “More people die every year from smoking than from murder, AIDS, suicide, drugs, car crashes, and alcohol, **combined**.”

» **The addictiveness of smoking and nicotine**

Example of ad copy tobacco companies are required to run verbatim: “Cigarette companies intentionally designed cigarettes with enough nicotine to create and sustain addiction.”

» **The lack of significant health benefit from smoking “low tar,” “light,” “ultra light,” “mild” and “natural” cigarettes (products that have been deceptively marketed as less harmful than regular cigarettes)**

Example of ad copy tobacco companies are required to run verbatim: “All cigarettes cause cancer, lung disease, heart attacks, and premature death – lights, low tar, ultra lights, and naturals. There is no safe cigarette.”

» **The manipulation of cigarette design and composition to ensure optimum nicotine delivery**

Example of ad copy tobacco companies are required to run verbatim: “Cigarette companies control the impact and delivery of nicotine in many ways, including designing filters and selecting cigarette paper to maximize the ingestion of nicotine, adding ammonia to make the cigarette taste less harsh, and controlling the physical and chemical make-up of the tobacco blend.”

» **The adverse health effects of exposure to secondhand smoke**

Example of ad copy tobacco companies are required to run verbatim: “Secondhand smoke kills over 38,000 Americans each year.”

The TV ads can be viewed [here](#).

“Defendants have known many of these facts for at least 50 years or more,” said Judge Kessler. “Despite that knowledge, they have consistently, repeatedly and with enormous skill and sophistication, denied these facts to the public, to the Government, and to the public health community.”

In a 1994 Congressional hearing, [recorded by C-SPAN](#), then U.S. Rep. Ron Wyden is seen asking a row of tobacco industry executives, one after the other, if the nicotine in cigarettes is addictive. They all say no. We now know they were lying. Their products are the leading cause of preventable death in Oregon, the U.S., and the world. In

Oregon, tobacco is the cause of more than 7,000 deaths every year.

“Oregon is recognized nationally for its tobacco prevention work, yet tobacco is still the leading cause of preventable death and disease,” says Lillian Shirley, Public Health Director at the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division. “This ruling exposes the illegal and destructive practices of the tobacco industry, and motivates us to continue strong prevention efforts – especially when it comes to children.”

More than 7,000 Oregonians die each year from tobacco-related diseases.



Research has shown that 90 percent of smokers begin smoking before the age of 18.

While the U.S. hasn't seen television advertisements for tobacco since 1971, the tobacco industry markets to children in other ways, especially in the retail environment. Tobacco is cheap and available in flavors to attract kids.

Oregon is a longtime leader in tobacco prevention. The Tobacco Quit Line, launched in 1998, made Oregon the first state to offer over-the-phone support to tobacco users who want to quit.



In 2007, the state passed the Indoor Clean Air Act, a workplace law protecting people from secondhand smoke. This law was expanded in 2016 to include e-cigarettes, vape pens and more. Most recently, Oregon became the fifth state to pass Tobacco 21, increasing the legal age to purchase tobacco products to 21.

SMOKEFREE
oregon

For more information about tobacco prevention and the work being done in Oregon, visit SmokefreeOregon.com.