



TPackSS: Tobacco Pack Surveillance System Cigarette Health Warning Label Compliance



Viet Nam - 2015

As of October 2015, Viet Nam's health warning labels (HWLs) – which fulfill the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 11 minimum requirements – included the following:

1. 50 percent coverage of the front and back of the pack, with color pictorial HWLs
2. Text warning displayed on contrasting background color
3. Six different tobacco use health warning messages, in Vietnamese



Front of pack Back of pack

Viet Nam's HWL size tied for 8th in the WHO Western Pacific Region and tied for 28th globally in 2014¹. Viet Nam meets FCTC guidelines for warning size on the front and back of the pack.

TPackSS assesses health warning label compliance as HWL requirements improve in countries. In October 2015, TPackSS collected cigarette packs in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, and Danang using a systematic protocol.² Cigarette packs were assessed for compliance with the current HWL policy in place at the time of data collection.³

Article 11 of the World Health Organization's (WHO) FCTC requires that Parties implement effective tobacco packaging and labeling measures to increase public awareness of the negative health impacts of tobacco products.

TPackSS systematically collected a sample of 88 unique cigarette packs that displayed the HWLs mandated by Viet Nam. Packs were assessed for compliance with four key requirements.³

Warning Location

100 percent of packs had a health warning printed at the top edge of the pack.



Warning Size

76 percent of packs had a health warning that covered 50 percent of both the front and back of the pack.



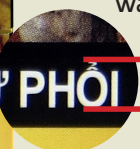
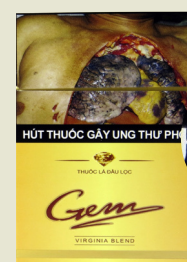
Warning Label Elements

100 percent of packs had a health warning displaying white text along with a pictorial warning enclosed with a black border.



Warning Text Size

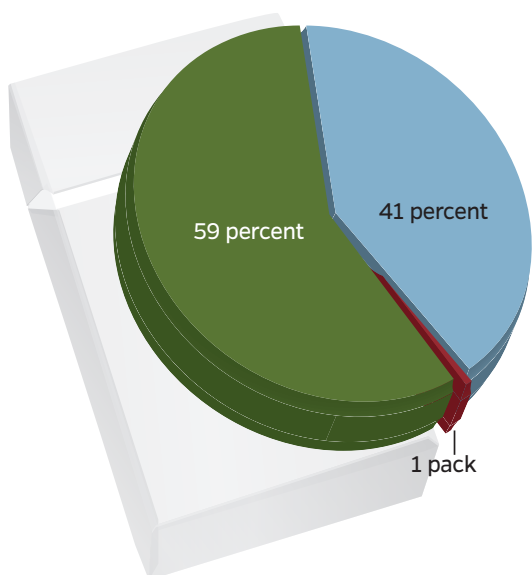
88 percent of packs had health warning text measuring at least 3mm in height.



65% of the unique cigarette packs assessed were compliant with the four key HWL requirements.

Area of Concern: Foreign Packs

Over forty percent of packs collected did not have a Vietnamese HWL: here is a selection of some of these packs. The continued presence of foreign tobacco packs without government required graphic health warnings in Vietnamese undermines tobacco control efforts.



Breakdown of packs collected and presence of required HWLs*

Total number of unique packs collected: 150

- **59 percent** of total packs had a current mandated HWL (n=88)
- **41 percent** of total packs had no HWL or a non-Vietnamese HWL (n=61)
- **1 pack** had a previous Vietnamese HWL

*Percentages do not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.

Approximately four in ten of all packs collected in Viet Nam displayed a non-Vietnamese HWL or no HWL. Viet Nam should take action to reduce the sale of packs that do not bear the mandated Vietnamese HWL. Exposure to best practice HWLs can improve the effectiveness of HWLs in Viet Nam.

¹ Canadian Cancer Society. Cigarette Package Health Warnings: International Status Report, Fourth Edition. Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids; 2014. http://global.tobaccofreekids.org/files/pdfs/en/WL_status_report_en.pdf. Accessed May 25, 2016.

² Smith K, Washington C, Brown J, Vadhais A, Kroart L, Ferguson J, Cohen J. The Tobacco Pack Surveillance System: A Protocol for Assessing Health Warning Compliance, Design Features, and Appeals of Tobacco Packs Sold in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. *JMIR Public Health Surveill.* 2015;1(2). doi: 10.2196/publichealth.4616.

³ Law on Prevention and Control of Tobacco Harms, No. 09/2012/QH13 (effective May 1, 2013), Socialist Republic of Vietnam; Joint Circular Guiding the Labeling, Printing of Health Warnings on Tobacco Packages, No. 05/2013/TTLT-BYT-BCT (effective May 1, 2013), Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

⁴ Market Research Provider, Euromonitor International. Brand Shares. Tobacco: Euromonitor from trade sources/national statistics. <http://www.portal.euromonitor.com/portal/statistics/changemeasure>. Published June 8, 2015. Accessed September 29, 2015.

About TPackSS

The Institute for Global Tobacco Control (IGTC) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health developed the Tobacco Pack Surveillance System (TPackSS) project to monitor whether required health warnings on tobacco packages are being implemented as intended, and to identify pack features and marketing appeals that might violate or detract from current tobacco packaging laws in these countries.