
TOBACCO CUTS

A service of the Non-Smokers' Rights Association (NSRA)
and the Smoking and Health Action Foundation (SHAF)

Tobacco Consumption Down in First Quarter, 2002

Cigarette sales in Canada are down 5.2% in the first three months of 2002 compared to the same period last year, Statistics Canada reported today. Given Canada's rising population, this is equivalent to a drop in per capita consumption of more than 6%.

It is worth noting that at this time last year, Rothmans was predicting annual declines of just 1.2%. (See Rothmans Inc. Annual Report, 2000.)

The figures provide clear evidence that recent tobacco control efforts are having a significant impact. In particular, these figures include the full impact of the April 2001 and November 2001 tax increases (primarily in Central Canada and the Maritimes). This was also the period when new pack warnings were showing up on shelves across the country and when various smoking restrictions came into effect in several locations.

One counter-trend should be noted: sales of fine-cut tobacco (i.e. roll-your-own) actually increased, by almost 30,000 kg. This indicates that some price-sensitive smokers are shifting to roll-your-own. Since the price differential between roll-your-own and manufactured cigarettes is almost entirely a government creation, via differing tax rates, this is a trend governments could easily fix.

However, given the small size of the fine-cut market in most of Canada, increased fine-cut sales account for less than one-tenth of the drop in cigarette sales: the rest can be attributed to successful tobacco control!

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