

Govt plans mandatory 30-second ads against tobacco use on OTTs

HTC and agencies

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NEW DELHI: The Union health ministry has proposed mandatory display of “non-skippable” anti-tobacco health spots of at least 30 seconds and audio-visual disclaimer on ill-effects of tobacco use for 20 seconds on over-the-top (OTT) platforms as soon as one starts streaming them.

According to the recently released draft amendments for anti-tobacco rules for OTT platforms, all films of Indian and foreign origin irrespective of their CBFC certification status published and released on or after September 1, 2023, will have to display anti-tobacco health spots of minimum 30 seconds duration each at the beginning and middle of the movie.

It also proposed displaying anti-tobacco health warnings as prominent static messages at the bottom of the screen during the scenes that show use of tobacco products in all content.

“The Cigarette and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Amendment Rules 2024” amend the anti-tobacco rules that the ministry had issued in May last year.

The 2023 rules also mentioned that every publisher of online curated content displaying tobacco products will have to display anti-tobacco health spots of minimum 30 seconds duration each at the beginning and middle of the film and display anti-tobacco health warning as a prominent static message at the bottom of the screen during the

IN ITS DRAFT AMENDMENTS FOR ANTI-TOBACCO RULES, THE GOVT HAS PROPOSED MANDATORY DISPLAY OF ‘NON-SKIPPABLE’ ADS

period of the display of tobacco products or their use.

But the 2023 rules did not explicitly use the term “films” and separately detailing the rules for them.

The draft rules issued on September 13 state, “All content published in the online curated content platforms, shall display non-skippable and anti-tobacco health spots of minimum 30 seconds duration and non-skippable audio-visual disclaimer on the ill effects of tobacco use, of minimum 20 seconds upon opening the platforms of the publishers of the online curated content.”

An official aware of the matter said: “Basically streaming platforms now will have to show these health spots and audio-visual disclaimers not just in the beginning and in the middle of the programmes but as soon as someone opens up the streaming platform. In the existing current rules, the health spots and audio-visual disclaimers are not displayed immediately after opening the platforms.”

The draft rules have been published in the Gazette of India for information of all stakeholders who can send their suggestions and objections till October 13.