

ALMR Press Notice

Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers

19 November 2006

Smoking Regulations - too little, too late

The *ALMR* is relieved that the Department of Health has acknowledged the need to publish the definitions of semi-enclosed areas for the outside of pubs and bars and other premises that need to implement the smoking ban next July 1st.

The relief turns to irritation that all this could have been done a long time ago because nothing has changed from the draft regulations proposed last summer and in the long review of the submissions there is no sign that the concerns of operators have been considered, let alone resolved.

The definition of a semi-enclosed area imposes an onerous burden that will have to be interpreted locally, site by site, and will remain at the whim of the local enforcement authority. For example the definition fails completely to understand the issue of courtyards where a single parasol will, apparently, disqualify the area from being 'outside'.

Nick Bish, *ALMR's* Chief Executive comments "Operators at last have the chance to get on with planning how they will look after their customer, smokers and non-smokers alike, but there is still the gamble of investing twice – once for what they think they are allowed, and again to comply with the local enforcers' interpretation of the rules. This will be a particular burden on the smaller, individual businesses who are going to be at the front line of making a success of the ban."

ALMR notes that the government is going to supply the signage – once we have received Brussels approval – and applauds this gesture, depending on how it translates into practice.

The remaining Regulations – on exemptions and fines and vehicles have yet to be published and the *ALMR* hopes against hope that these will reflect the well argued concerns of members and other licensed trade submissions.

-ENDS-

Notes for Editors

- 1. The Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers (ALMR) is the only national trade body dedicated to representing the interests of pub and bar operators and providing their companies with business support and advice. There are currently just fewer than 100 companies in membership, between them operating 30,000 outlets – or half the UK pub estate. However, the bulk of our membership is derived from small independent companies operating 50 outlets or fewer under their own branding*

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