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Inspectors told to look out for public smoking on No Tobacco Day this weekend

• By JUDY SIEGEL

The Health Ministry has asked local authorities to be especially rigorous and active in handing out fines to smokers in public places and workplaces on Thursday and Friday, which is World No Tobacco Day. The event, marked around the globe since 1987, is aimed at increasing awareness of the deadliness of tobacco.

Inspectors will visit hospitals, swimming pools, bus and train stations, government offices, wedding halls and other spots to catch smokers in the act. According to the 2012 Smoking Report delivered by Health Minister Yael German on Monday, only 2,500 smoking fines were handed out that year all over the country, even though the municipalities have many hundreds of multi-purpose inspectors.

Not only smokers themselves will be fined, but also owners of premises where the violations are carried out, as owners are by law responsible for enforcing the laws or reporting violators to the municipalities and local authorities.

Ministry director-general Prof. Ronni Gamzu asked the municipalities to send in written reports by next week reporting how many fines they handed out and where.

Nevertheless, the ministry has not financed any new public service announcements on TV or radio in honor of the occasion, claiming that it lacks the funds, and German did not



A WOMAN lights a cigarette in Tel Aviv. (Gil Cohen Magen/Reuters)

hold the traditional No Tobacco Day press conference, but only appeared with the report in the Knesset Labor, Social Welfare and Health Committee.

The Israel Cancer Association (ICA) is sending messages to thousands of young people about to take driving tests stating that smoking while driving – and at all – is deadly. Leaflets stating that “A cigarette kills you in many ways” will be distributed. They explain that smoking while driving not only distracts drivers and can burn the upholstery, but also poisons passengers

through secondhand smoke in a closed space.

New published research has shown a significant connection between smoking among men and women and contracting acute myeloid leukemia (AML), the ICA said. The more cigarettes smoked and the more years of smoking, the higher the risk of getting AML.

Other studies have shown that women who smoke during pregnancy pose a higher risk of developing obesity and diabetes among their daughters.