

HEALTH

Ban soon on alcohol ads on radio, TV

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The national committee on alcohol control has finally agreed to ban alcohol advertising on radio and television around the clock, except for pass-through advertisements that come with international sports programmes.

Public Health Minister Phinij Jarusombat, the committee chairman, said the decision was the first step to reduce a number of young drinkers.

Other campaigns would be introduced to limit the growing rate of domestic alcohol consumption, he said.

"The Public Relations Department will enforce the ban. The committee on consumer protection will consider the ban on alcohol advertising on other media, and this can be expected soon," the minister said.

Alcohol consumption among Thais stood at 58 litres a year in 2003, up from 20.2 litres a year in 1989. About 1.06 million drinkers are aged 11-19. Drunk driving causes up to 45% of road accidents.

Mr Phinji said a ban on alcohol advertising posters was also possible, and zoning restrictions on restaurants serving alcohol.

Witawat Jayapani, vice-president of the Advertising Association of Thailand, said his association was not worried about the ban although he admitted it would affect some members.

Annual advertising revenue stood at 100 billion baht. Of this, only two billion baht came from the alcohol industry, Mr Witawat said.