



Drivers smoking shisha at the wheel will be fined, says top UAE cop

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Police have launched a crackdown on motorists smoking shisha behind the wheel - amid fears the “dangerous” practice is growing.

General Mohammad Saif Al Zafeen, head of the Federal Traffic Council, said officers have been tasked with stopping and issuing fines over such “surprising” behaviour on the roads.

Some firms are even marketing car shisha devices, as 7DAYS has found adverts for packs that can be attached to car seats.

Al Zafeen also said he will take the issue to the traffic council and push for a change in the law nationwide.

At present, there is no specific offence under UAE law of smoking shisha in a vehicle. But Al Zafeen said officers have been told to fine motorists under careless driving laws until a solution can be found.

“I’m surprised at this new habit of smoking shisha in cars, it’s clearly dangerous,” he said. “Such acts make the chances of traffic accidents more likely.”

Anyone spotted smoking shisha inside a car will be fined Dhs500, he added.

“These motorists are a danger as the driver will be busy holding the shisha hose to smoke or they’d be distracted if they dropped it,”

said Al Zafeen. “It’s just like motorists who use their mobile phones while driving. They could kill themselves and other road users, especially if driving at high speeds.”

Al Zafeen said the Federal Traffic Council would be discussing the matter and he would be proposing “strict laws”.

He added officers had stopped some drivers, only for the motorists to claim they were skilled enough to manage both tasks.

“They don’t care about other people’s lives,” he said.

Al Zafeen said police also intend to target websites that advertise special car shisha kits.

“They’re made solely for the Arab world - you don’t see such issues in the European countries. It’s reckless behaviour by drivers in the UAE,” he said.

7DAYS came across local websites selling portable shishas for Dhs198, which can be tied to the back of the front seats for ease of use.

Dr Mark Janowski, from the Dubai Physiotherapy and Family Medicine Clinic, in Jumeirah 1, said smoking shisha at the wheel was a “terrible idea, a fire hazard and has the potential to impair judgement”.

“A lot of people pass out after smoking too much shisha and frequently get dizzy,” he said. “For medical reasons - and mechanical reasons - this is a very easy to support. Al Zafeen is very much on the right track on banning this.

“And I think anyone smoking shisha while driving would have mental issues to worry about too.”

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