



# Nailing cig-tax cheats

## Up in Smoke

Top 10 New Yorkers being fined by city over Internet cigarette purchases



Name	Cartons	NYC tax	Penalty	Total due
Thomas Faernstrom	377	\$5,655	\$37,700	\$43,355
Koseph Lineman	332	\$4,980	\$33,200	\$37,180
Yevgeny Lipatov	285	\$4,275	\$28,500	\$32,775
John Stassins	267	\$4,005	\$26,700	\$30,705
Viktoriya Dashevsky	236	\$3,540	\$23,600	\$27,140
Steven Dansker	234	\$3,510	\$23,600	\$27,140
Andrey Borisov	225	\$3,375	\$22,500	\$25,875
Matthew Ricciardi	181	\$2,715	\$18,100	\$20,815
Igor Spektor	166	\$2,490	\$16,600	\$18,945
Federico Sementini	165	\$2,475	\$16,500	\$18,945

Source: NYC Dept. of Finance

By DAVID SEIFMAN and HEATHER GILMORE

The city has come up with a new 10 Most Wanted list — serial cigarette scofflaws who will have to cough up upwards of \$40,000 for buying bushels of butts online.

The smokers likely thought they were being savvy by ordering hundreds of cartons of smokes from Web sites and not paying tax on the orders, the city said.

But the end result is they've puffed the most expensive cigarettes on earth, with the city billing them \$150 per pack for unpaid taxes, with an added penalty of \$100 per carton.

The city Finance Department is hunting down 194 Most Wanted Smokers who, the agency said, failed to respond to two written requests over the past year to settle up. The Post exclusively obtained the top 10 list. Eight of the worst offenders owe heart attack-inducing penalties of more than \$20,000.

No. 1 on the list, Thomas Faernstrom, is accused of buying 377 untaxed cartons since July 2002, when

the city's tax on cigarettes soared. He's been billed \$43,355, representing \$5,655 in taxes and \$37,700 in penalties.

A man who answered the door at Faernstrom's most recent listed address in Bensonhurst said the alleged butt hoarder didn't live there, and a phone number at his current listed address in Richmond, Va., is disconnected. Others on the list have also proved elusive. The city said two on the list of 194 have died.

The Post successfully tracked down one of the alleged Top-10 scofflaws in Florida. The former New Yorker, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said he was not happy about the city's crack-down. "It's ridiculous. They're such a--holes. I haven't got anything in the mail here," he said. "The bastards. I got those cigarettes legally from an Indian reservation over a period of years; this is just revenue-raising."

The agency has set up a hot line, (718) 403-4300, for those who want to come clean.

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