

RIGID SWING-OPEN PACKET OF CIGARETTES

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a rigid swing-open
5 packet of cigarettes.

BACKGROUND ART

Rigid, hinged-lid packets of cigarettes are
currently the most widely marketed, by being easy to
produce, practical and easy to use, and by effectively
10 protecting the cigarettes inside.

In addition to rigid, hinged-lid packets of
cigarettes, rigid slide-open or swing-open packets of
cigarettes have been proposed comprising two containers,
one inserted in partly removable manner inside the
15 other. In other words, a rigid slide-open or swing-open
packet of cigarettes comprises a first container housing
a group of cigarettes, and in turn housed inside a
second container to move, with respect to the second
container, between a closed position, in which the first
20 container is inserted inside the second container, and
an open position, in which the first container is
extracted from the second container. The movement of the
first container with respect to the second container may
be either a straight (slide-open) movement, or a
25 rotational (swing-open) movement about a hinge
connecting the two containers.

A number of embodiments of rigid, straight slide-
open packets of cigarettes are described in FR2499947A1,

US4534463A1 and US5080227A1, and one embodiment of a rigid, swing-open packet of cigarettes is described in WO2006021581.

Known rigid swing-open packets of cigarettes,
5 however, have various drawbacks, by being complicated and expensive to produce, and relatively complicated to open.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide
10 a rigid swing-open packet of cigarettes designed to eliminate the aforementioned drawbacks, and which, in particular, is cheap and easy to produce.

According to the present invention, there is provided a rigid swing-open packet of cigarettes as
15 claimed in the accompanying Claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A number of non-limiting embodiments of the present invention will be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

20 Figure 1 shows a view in perspective of a rigid, swing-open packet of cigarettes in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2 shows a view in perspective of the Figure 1 packet of cigarettes in a fully open configuration;

25 Figure 3 shows a front view, with parts removed for clarity, of the Figure 1 packet of cigarettes in a partly open configuration;

Figure 4 shows a plan view of a blank from which to

form an inner container of the Figure 1 packet of cigarettes;

Figure 5 shows a plan view of a blank from which to form an outer container of the Figure 1 packet of cigarettes;

Figure 6 shows a view in perspective of a different embodiment of the Figure 1 packet of cigarettes in a fully open configuration;

Figure 7 shows a front view, with parts removed for clarity, of the Figure 6 packet of cigarettes in a partly open configuration;

Figure 8 shows a plan view of a blank from which to form an inner container of the Figure 6 packet of cigarettes;

Figure 9 shows a plan view of a blank from which to form an outer container of the Figure 6 packet of cigarettes;

Figure 10 shows a view in perspective of a further embodiment of the Figure 1 packet of cigarettes in a fully open configuration;

Figure 11 shows a front view, with parts removed for clarity, of a variation of the Figure 6 packet of cigarettes in a partly open configuration;

Figure 12 shows a plan view of a blank from which to form an outer container of the Figure 11 packet of cigarettes;

Figures 13 and 14 show two variations of the Figure 12 blank to form an outer container with rounded

longitudinal edges;

Figure 15 shows a variation of the Figure 12 blank to form an outer container with bevelled longitudinal edges;

5 Figures 16-19 show plan views of various embodiments of a blank from which to form an inner container of the Figure 11 packet of cigarettes;

Figure 20 shows a variation of the Figure 16 blank to form an inner container with rounded longitudinal
10 edges;

Figure 21 shows a variation of the Figure 16 blank to form an inner container with bevelled longitudinal edges.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

15 Number 1 in Figure 1 indicates as a whole a rigid swing-open packet of cigarettes.

The Figure 1 packet 1 of cigarettes comprises two groups 2 of cigarettes (only one shown schematically in Figure 2); two rigid, parallelepiped-shaped inner
20 containers 3, each housing a group 2 of cigarettes; and a rigid, parallelepiped-shaped outer container 4 housing inner containers 3. Each group 2 of cigarettes is preferably wrapped in a sheet of foil packing material having a tear-off top portion to permit removal of the
25 cigarettes.

Each inner container 3 is hinged to outer container 4 at a hinge 14 to rotate, with respect to outer container 4, between a closed position (Figure 1), in

which inner container 3 is fully inserted inside outer container 4, and an open position (Figure 2), in which inner container 3 is partly extracted from outer container 4 to allow access to group 2 of cigarettes.

5 Each inner container 3 is parallelepiped- and cup-shaped, and has an open top end 5 from which the cigarettes are withdrawn; a bottom wall 6 opposite open top end 5; a front wall 7; a rear wall 8 opposite and parallel to front wall 7; and two opposite parallel
10 lateral walls 9.

Outer container 4 is also parallelepiped-shaped, and has a top wall 10; a bottom wall 11 opposite and parallel to top wall 10; two opposite parallel lateral walls 12; and two opposite open lateral ends 13, through
15 each of which an inner container 3 is extracted from or inserted into outer container 4 into the open or closed position respectively.

Each inner container 3 is hinged to outer container 4 by a hinge 14 located between an edge of bottom wall 6
20 of inner container 3 and an edge of bottom wall 11 of outer container 4 at a respective open lateral end 13 of outer container 4.

In a preferred embodiment, rear wall 8 of each container 3 is lower than front wall 7, so that, in the
25 closed position, front wall 7 closes respective open lateral end 13 of outer container 4 completely, and rotation of inner container 3 about hinge 14 and with respect to outer container 4 is not impeded by rear wall

8 interfering with top wall 10 of outer container 4; and the top portion of each lateral wall 9 of each inner container 3 is shaped to connect front wall 7 smoothly to rear wall 8 to compensate for the difference in height.

Packet 1 of cigarettes has stop means for limiting extraction, and preventing excessive extraction, of each inner container 3 from outer container 4, and which, for each inner container 3, comprise two retaining tabs 15 projecting outwards of outer container 4 from lateral walls 9 of inner container 3 and located close to rear wall 8 of inner container 3; and two retaining pockets 16 projecting inwards of outer container 4 from lateral walls 12 of outer container 4 and located close to the relative open end 13 of outer container 4. In actual use, as inner container 3 rotates, about hinge 14 and with respect to outer container 4, from the closed to the open position, each retaining tab 15 engages a respective retaining pocket 16 to arrest extraction of inner container 3.

To open each inner container 3, the user of packet 1 of cigarettes must pull inner container 3 with respect to outer container 4, and must therefore grip outer container 4 with one hand, and inner container 3 with the other. For easy grip of inner containers 3, each inner container 3 may comprise a grip tab (not shown) projecting outwards from a top edge of front wall 7; or each lateral wall 12 of outer container 4 may have a

recess (e.g. semicircular) close to each open lateral end 13, so the user of packet 1 of cigarettes can grip and exert pull on lateral walls 9 of each inner container 3; or top wall 10 of outer container 4 may
5 have a recess (e.g. semicircular) close to each open lateral end 13, so the user of packet 1 of cigarettes can grip and exert pull on front wall 7 of each inner container 3; or front wall 7 of each inner container 3 may have a recess (e.g. semicircular) at the top.

10 In the Figure 1-3 embodiment, packet 1 of cigarettes comprises two inner containers 3, each housed inside outer container 4 and hinged to outer container 4 along a hinge 14 to rotate between the closed position and the open position. In a different embodiment not
15 shown, packet 1 of cigarettes comprises one inner container 3 housed inside outer container 4 and hinged to outer container 4 along a hinge 14 to rotate between the closed position and the open position; in which case, outer container 4 is half the size of outer
20 container 4 in Figures 1-3, and one of the two open lateral ends 13 of outer container 4 is closed by a further lateral wall.

In the Figure 1-3 embodiment, packet 1 of cigarettes comprises two inner containers 3, and two
25 groups 2 of cigarettes, each housed in a respective inner container 3. In a different embodiment shown in Figure 10, packet 1 of cigarettes comprises one group 2 of cigarettes housed in a main inner container 3a, while

the other secondary inner container 3b houses an accessory (e.g. matches or a lighter) or functions as an ashtray. In this case, the two inner containers 3 may either be identical (as in Figures 1-3) or different.

5 For example, as shown in Figure 10, hinge 14 of main inner container 3a is located between an edge of bottom wall 6 of main inner container 3a and an edge of bottom wall 11 of outer container 4, while hinge 14 of secondary inner container 3b is located between an edge

10 of a lateral wall 9 of secondary inner container 3b and an edge of a lateral wall 12 of outer container 4.

As shown in Figure 4, each inner container 3 is formed by folding a flat, substantially elongated rectangular blank 17, the component parts of which are

15 indicated, where possible, using the same reference numbers, with superscripts, as for the corresponding parts of inner container 3.

Blank 17 has two longitudinal fold lines 18, and a number of transverse fold lines 19 defining, between the

20 two longitudinal fold lines 18, a panel 8' forming rear wall 8; a panel 6' forming bottom wall 6; and a panel 7' forming front wall 7.

Panel 7' has a reinforcing flap 20 connected to panel 7' along a transverse fold line 19, and which is

25 folded 180° onto panel 7' to strengthen the top portion of front wall 7.

Panel 8' has two lateral wings 9', which form respective inner portions of lateral walls 9, are

located on opposite sides of panel 8', and are separated from panel 8' by longitudinal fold lines 18. Panel 7' has two lateral wings 9", which form respective outer portions of lateral walls 9, are located on opposite sides of panel 7', and are separated from panel 7' by longitudinal fold lines 18. Each lateral wing 9' of panel 8' has a tab 21 separated from lateral wing 9' by a transverse fold line 19. A window 22 is formed in each lateral wing 9' and contains a respective retaining tab 15. And each lateral wing 9" has a recess 23 located so as to be superimposed over a respective retaining tab 15.

To form inner container 3, panels 7' and 8' are folded 90° with respect to panel 6'; lateral wings 9' are folded 90° with respect to panel 8'; and lateral wings 9" are folded 90° with respect to panel 7' and on top of the folded lateral wings 9'.

As shown in Figure 5, outer container 4 is formed by folding a flat, substantially elongated rectangular blank 24, the component parts of which are indicated, where possible, using the same reference numbers, with superscripts, as for the corresponding parts of outer container 4.

Blank 24 has two longitudinal fold lines 25, and a number of transverse fold lines 26 defining, between the two longitudinal fold lines 25, a panel 11' forming an inner portion of bottom wall 11; a panel 12' forming one lateral wall 12; a panel 10' forming top wall 10; a

panel 12" forming the other lateral wall 12; and a panel 11" forming an outer portion of bottom wall 11.

Panel 10' has two reinforcing flaps 27, which are located on opposite sides of panel 10', are separated
5 from panel 10' by longitudinal fold lines 25, and are folded 180° onto panel 10' to strengthen top wall 10.

Panels 12', 12" each have two retaining pockets 16, which are located on opposite sides of panel 12', 12", are separated from panel 12', 12" by longitudinal fold
10 lines 25, and are folded 180° onto panel 12', 12".

Panel 11' has two connecting tabs 28, which are located on opposite sides of panel 11', are separated from panel 11' by longitudinal fold lines 25, and are folded 180° onto panel 11'. Each connecting tab 28 is
15 glued to bottom wall 6 of a respective inner container 3 to hinge the inner container 3 to outer container 4, so the portion of longitudinal fold line 25 separating each connecting tab 28 from panel 11' forms the hinge 14 of a respective inner container 3.

20 To form outer container 4, retaining pockets 16 are folded 180° onto relative panels 12', 12"; reinforcing flaps 27 are folded 180° onto panel 10'; connecting tabs 28 are folded 180° onto panel 11'; panels 12', 12" are folded 90° with respect to panel 10'; panel 11' is
25 folded 90° with respect to panel 12'; and panel 11" is folded 90° with respect to panel 12" and on top of the folded panel 11'.

In the Figure 1-3 embodiment, the open top end 5 of

each inner container 3 is left open, i.e. has no covering. In a different embodiment not shown, each inner container 3 comprises a tear-off cover closing open top end 5, connected to the rest of inner container 3 along tear lines, and which is torn off when inner container 3 is unsealed. In the Figure 6 and 7 embodiment, each inner container 3 comprises a hinged lid 29 hinged to inner container 3 along a lid hinge 30 to rotate, with respect to inner container 3, between an open position and a closed position opening and closing open top end 5 respectively.

Each lid 29 comprises a rectangular top wall 31 opposite and parallel to bottom wall 6 of inner container 3 when lid 29 is in the closed position; a rectangular rear wall 32 which forms an extension of rear wall 8 of inner container 3 when lid 29 is in the closed position; and two triangular lateral walls 33 which form extensions of lateral walls 9 of inner container 3 when lid 29 is in the closed position. And hinge 30 of each lid 29 connects a top edge of rear wall 8 of inner container 3 to a bottom edge of rear wall 32 of lid 29.

In a preferred embodiment, each lid 29 has an actuating system 34 which connects lid 29 to outer container 4 so that, when inner container 3 is extracted from/inserted into outer container 4, lid 29 is connected to outer container 4 to open/close lid 29. By means of actuating system 34, each lid 29 is therefore

opened/closed "automatically", with no manual effort on the part of the user, by extracting/inserting inner container 3. As shown in Figure 7, each actuating system 34 comprises an actuating tab 35 extending inwards of
 5 outer container 4 from an edge of top wall 10 of outer container 4; and a slot 36 formed through top wall 31 of lid 29, and which is engaged by actuating tab 35.

Figure 8 shows a blank 17 from which to form an inner container 3 as shown in Figures 6 and 7, i.e. with
 10 lid 29. Blank 17 in Figure 8 differs from the Figure 4 blank 17 described above by comprising a panel 32' forming rear wall 32 of lid 29; a panel 31' forming top wall 31 of lid 29; and two lateral wings 33' forming lateral walls 33 of lid 29. Each lateral wing 33' has a
 15 tab 37, which is folded 90° with respect to lateral wing 33', is fixed to an inner surface of panel 31', and closes slot 36 from the inside. More specifically, each tab 37 has a bevelled corner to leave slot 36 partly open. Tabs 37 assist in holding actuating tab 35, once
 20 inserted, inside slot 36. It is important to note that, to insert actuating tab 35 inside slot 36, tabs 37 must flex elastically and so act like springs which press actuating tab 35 against top wall 31 of lid 29.

Figure 9 shows a blank 24 from which to form the
 25 outer container 4 in Figures 6 and 7, i.e. with actuating tabs 35. Unlike the Figure 5 blank 24 described above, reinforcing flaps 27 of the Figure 9 blank 24 each have a window 38 in which an actuating tab

35 is formed.

As described above, each inner container 3 is hinged to outer container 4 by a connecting tab 28, which is hinged to outer container 4 along hinge 14 and
5 glued to bottom wall 6 of inner container 3. Each connecting tab 28 is not normally glued to bottom wall 11 of outer container 4, so as to rotate freely with respect to outer container 4. Alternatively, each connecting tab 28 may be glued to bottom wall 11 of
10 outer container 4 using non-setting, re-stick adhesive applied between the bottom surface of connecting tab 28 and the top surface of bottom wall 11 of outer container 4, so connecting tab 28 can be detached repeatedly from bottom wall 11 (i.e. each time inner container 3 is
15 extracted from packet 1 of cigarettes) and then fixed back to bottom wall 11. In one variation, each connecting tab 28 is glued to bottom wall 11 of outer container 4 using weak-stick adhesive which releases its hold the first time inner container 3 is extracted. In
20 another variation, connecting tab 28 is fixed to bottom wall 11 of outer container 4 by a tear line which is torn the first time inner container 3 is extracted. In a different embodiment, as opposed to being hinged to outer container 4 and glued to inner container 3, each
25 connecting tab 28 may be hinged to inner container 3 and glued to outer container 4.

In the Figure 1-9 embodiments, each hinge 14 is located at an edge of bottom wall 6 of inner container 3

and an edge of bottom wall 11 of outer container 4 at a respective open lateral end 13 of outer container 4. In other words, in the Figure 1-9 embodiments, each hinge 14 coincides with a bottom transverse edge of inner container 3, and with a bottom transverse edge of outer container 4.

In a different embodiment shown in Figure 11, each hinge 14 is located a given distance from an edge of bottom wall 6 of inner container 3 and from an edge of bottom wall 11 of outer container 4 at a respective open lateral end 13 of outer container 4. In other words, in the Figure 11 embodiment, each hinge 14 is located a given distance from a bottom transverse edge of inner container 3 and from a bottom transverse edge of outer container 4, so the two hinges 14 are located closer to the centre (i.e. closer to each other).

Locating the two hinges 14 closer to each other improves extraction of inner containers 3, and reduces the distance between top wall 31 of each lid 29 and top wall 10 of outer container 4 when inner containers 3 are in the closed position. The Figure 11 embodiment is particularly suitable for tall, narrow packets 1 of cigarettes. Moreover, by locating the two hinges 14 at different distances from the respective edges of bottom wall 6 of inner container 3 and bottom wall 11 of outer container 4, two inner containers 3 of different sizes can be accommodated. Obviously, the larger the inner container 3 is, the greater the distance is between

hinge 14 and the respective edges of bottom wall 6 of inner container 3 and bottom wall 11 of outer container 4.

In the Figure 11 embodiment, each lateral wall 12 of outer container 4 has two recesses 39 exposing the lateral walls 9 of inner containers 3 underneath, and which provide for easy grip of inner containers 3 in the closed position. In other words, the two opposite lateral walls 9 of an inner container 3 in the closed position can be gripped by the user through the two opposite recesses 39 to pull inner container 3 easily into the open position.

Figure 12 shows a flat blank 24 from which to form outer container 4 of the Figure 11 packet 1 of cigarettes, and the component parts of which are indicated using the same reference numbers as for blank 24 in Figure 9. Figures 13 and 14 show two variations of the Figure 12 blank 24, to form outer container 4 with rounded longitudinal edges; and Figure 15 shows a variation of the Figure 12 blank 24, to form outer container 4 with bevelled longitudinal edges.

In the Figure 14 variation, panel 10' (forming top wall 10 of outer container 4) has two reinforcing flaps 27, which are located on opposite sides of panel 10', are separated from panel 10' by longitudinal fold lines 25, and are folded 180° onto panel 10' to strengthen top wall 10. Each reinforcing flap 27 has a further reinforcing flap 40, which is separated from reinforcing

flap 27 by a longitudinal fold line, and is folded 180° onto reinforcing flap 27 to further strengthen top wall 10. In this embodiment, actuating tabs 35 are connected to reinforcing flaps 40 along longitudinal fold lines.

5 The Figure 14 variation of blank 24 uses more material, but has the advantage of producing an extremely rigid top wall 10 of outer container 4. Reinforcing flaps 40 in Figure 14 form part of a blank 24 from which to form an outer container 4 with rounded longitudinal edges,

10 but may obviously also form part of any other embodiment of blank 24, such as that in Figure 9.

In a different embodiment not shown, packet 1 of cigarettes comprises a retaining member for holding a respective inner container 3 in the closed position with

15 a certain amount of force, and which, for each inner container 3, comprises a deformable member that must be deformed to move the inner container 3 from the closed to the open position. In other words, to move an inner container 3 from the closed to the open position,

20 sufficient force must be exerted on inner container 3 to deform the deformable member elastically. The function of the retaining member is to hold the inner container 3 in the closed position with a certain amount of force, and so prevent inner container 3 from opening

25 accidentally.

Figure 16 shows a flat blank 17 from which to form inner container 3 of the Figure 11 packet 1 of cigarettes, and the component parts of which are

indicated using the same reference numbers as for blank 17 in Figure 8.

The Figure 16 blank 17 differs from blank 17 in Figure 8 as to the shape of tabs 21 (perfectly rectangular in Figure 8, and with a bevelled corner in Figure 16), and above all as regards tabs 37 of wings 33' forming lateral walls 33 of lid 29. In the Figure 8 blank 17, each tab 37 is connected to respective wing 33' along a transverse fold line 19 extending the full width of tab 37; whereas, in the Figure 16 blank 17, each tab 37 is connected to respective wing 33' along a transverse fold line 19 extending along only part (roughly half) of the width of tab 37, in that a cut 41 is also formed between tab 37 and wing 33'.

Each cut 41 provides for a more supple connection of tab 37 and wing 33', so that less force is required to rotate tab 37 with respect to wing 33'. To be inserted inside slot 36, each actuating tab 35 must deform tabs 37, the force required to do which is reduced by cuts 41, thus making it easier to insert actuating tab 35 inside slot 36. It is important to note that tabs 37, on the one hand, oppose insertion of actuating tab 35 inside slot 36, but, on the other, assist in holding actuating tab 35, once inserted, inside slot 36. Cuts 41 provide for achieving just the right elasticity of tabs 37, and which represents the best compromise between allowing insertion of actuating tab 35 inside slot 36, and holding actuating tab 35,

once inserted, inside slot 36.

Figure 17 shows a different flat blank 17 from which to form inner container 3 of the Figure 11 packet 1 of cigarettes, and the component parts of which are indicated using the same reference numbers as for blank 17 in Figure 8. The Figure 17 blank 17 differs from blank 17 in Figure 8 by comprising a further panel 31" connected to panel 31' along a transverse fold line 19, and which is folded onto panel 31' to strengthen top wall 31 of lid 29.

Figure 18 shows a different flat blank 17 from which to form inner container 3 of the Figure 11 packet 1 of cigarettes, and the component parts of which are indicated using the same reference numbers as for blank 17 in Figure 8. The Figure 18 blank 17 differs from blank 17 in Figure 8 as regards the shape of tabs 37.

Figure 19 shows a different flat blank 17 from which to form inner container 3 of the Figure 11 packet 1 of cigarettes, and the component parts of which are indicated using the same reference numbers as for blank 17 in Figure 8. The Figure 19 blank 17 differs from blank 17 in Figure 8 as regards tabs 37. More specifically, each tab 37 comprises an appendix 42, which is located close to panel 31' (i.e. close to top wall 31 of lid 29), is connected to tab 37 along an oblique fold line 43, and is folded 180° onto tab 37.

Figure 20 shows a variation of the Figure 16 blank 17 to form an inner container 3 with two rounded front

longitudinal edges (i.e. on opposite sides of front wall 7).

Figure 21 shows a variation of the Figure 16 blank 17 to form an inner container 3 with two bevelled front longitudinal edges (i.e. on opposite sides of front wall 7).

In the embodiments shown in the attached drawings, the longitudinal and transverse edges of inner container 3 and outer container 4 are all square. Alternatively, the longitudinal and/or transverse edges of inner container 3 and outer container 4 may be non-square rounded or bevelled edges. Blanks 24 for forming outer container 4 with rounded or bevelled longitudinal edges are shown in Figures 13, 14, 15, and blanks 17 for forming inner containers with rounded or bevelled front longitudinal edges are shown in Figures 20 and 21.

Packet 1 of cigarettes as described herein has numerous advantages, by being easy to produce, and, above all, by making inner containers 3 extremely easy to open (i.e. extract from outer container 4).

CLAIMS

1) A rigid, swing-open packet of cigarettes comprising:
at least one group (2) of cigarettes;

at least one inner container (3) which houses a group (2) of cigarettes, is parallelepiped- and cup-shaped, and has an open top end (5) from which the cigarettes are withdrawn; a bottom wall (6) opposite open top end (5); a front wall (7); a rear wall (8) opposite and parallel to front wall (7); and two opposite parallel lateral walls (9);

an outer container (4), which houses the inner container (3), is parallelepiped-shaped, and has a top wall (10); a bottom wall (11) opposite and parallel to top wall (1); two opposite parallel lateral walls (12); and at least one open lateral end (13); and

a hinge (14) connecting the inner container (3) and the outer container (4) to allow the inner container (3) to rotate between a closed position, in which the inner container (3) is inserted inside the outer container (4), and an open position, in which the inner container (3) is at least partly extracted from the outer container (4) through the open lateral end (13);

wherein the hinge (14) is located close to an edge of the bottom wall (6) of the inner container (3) and close to an edge of the bottom wall (11) of the outer container (4) at the open lateral end (13) of the outer container (4);

wherein the inner container (3) comprises a hinged lid (29) hinged to the inner container (3) along a lid hinge (30) to rotate, with respect to the inner container (3), between an open position and a closed position opening and closing the open top end (5) respectively;

wherein the lid (29) has an actuating system (34) which connects the lid (29) to the outer container (4) so that, when the inner container (3) is extracted from/inserted into the outer container (4), the lid (29) is connected to the outer container (4) to open/close the lid (29); and

wherein the inner container (3) is formed by folding a flat first blank (17) and the outer container (4) is formed by folding a flat second blank (24); the packet (1) of cigarettes being **characterized in that**

there are provided two groups (2) of cigarettes and two inner containers (3), which are identical and each of which houses a group (2) of cigarettes, is housed in the outer container (4), and is hinged to the outer container (4) along a hinge (14) to rotate between the closed position and the open position;

each hinge (14) is located close to a respective edge of the bottom wall (6) of the inner container (3) and close to a respective edge of the bottom wall (11) of the outer container (4) at the open lateral end (13) of the outer container (4); and

the outer container (4) has two opposite open lateral ends (13), through each of which an inner container (3) is extracted from or inserted into the outer container (4) into

the open or closed position respectively, so that, in the closed position, the front wall (7) of each inner container (3) closes respective an open lateral end (13) of the outer container (4) completely.

2) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 1, wherein each hinge (14) is located between an edge of a wall (6, 9) of the inner container (3) and an edge of a wall (11, 12) of the outer container (4) at the open lateral end (13) of the outer container (4).

3) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 1, wherein each hinge (14) is located between an edge of a bottom wall (6) of the inner container (3) and an edge of a bottom wall (11) of the outer container (4) at the open lateral end (13) of the outer container (4).

4) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 1, wherein each hinge (14) is located a distance from an edge of a bottom wall (6) of the inner container (3) and from an edge of a bottom wall (11) of the outer container (4) at the open lateral end (13) of the outer container (4).

5) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 1, wherein each hinge (14) is located between an edge of a lateral wall (9) of the inner container (3) and an edge of a lateral wall (12) of the outer container (4) at the open lateral end (13) of the outer container (4).

6) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 5, wherein a rear wall (8) of the inner container (3) is lower than a front wall (7) of the inner container (3).

7) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 6, and comprising stop members for limiting extraction of the inner container (3) from the outer container (4).

8) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the stop members comprise:

two retaining tabs (15) projecting outwards of the outer container (4) from the lateral walls (9) of the inner container (3), and located close to a rear wall (8) of the inner container (3); and

two retaining pockets (16) projecting inwards of the outer container (4) from lateral walls (12) of the outer container (4), and located close to the open lateral end (13) of the outer container (4).

9) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 8, wherein the inner container (3) comprises a grip tab projecting outwards from a top edge of a front wall (7).

10) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 8, wherein each lateral wall (12) of the outer container (4) has a recess close to the open lateral end (13).

11) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 8, wherein a top wall (10) of the outer container (4) has a recess close to the open lateral end (13).

12) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 8, wherein a front wall (7) of the inner container (3) has a recess at the top.

13) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 12, wherein the lid hinge (30) connects a top edge of a rear wall (8) of the inner container (3) to a bottom edge of a rear wall (32) of the lid (29).

14) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 13, wherein the lid (29) comprises a rectangular top wall (31) opposite and parallel to a bottom wall (6) of the inner container (3) when the lid (29) is in the closed position; a rectangular rear wall (32) forming an extension of a rear wall (8) of the inner container (3) when the lid (29) is in the closed position; and two triangular lateral walls (33) forming extensions of lateral walls (9) of the inner container (3) when the lid (29) is in the closed position.

15) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the top wall (31) of the lid is defined by two separate superimposed panels (31', 31").

16) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 15, wherein the actuating system (34) comprises an actuating tab (35) extending inwards of the outer container (4) from an edge of a top wall (10) of the outer container (4); and a slot (36) formed through a top wall (31) of the lid (29), and which is engaged by the actuating tab (35).

17) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 16, wherein the lid (29) comprises two tabs (37), which are folded onto the top wall (31) of the lid (29) and at least partly close the slot (36) from the inside.

18) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the tabs (37) deform partly to allow the actuating tab (35) to engage the slot (36).

19) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 17 or 18, wherein the tabs (37) are connected to lateral walls (33) of the lid (29) along fold lines (19).

20) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 19, wherein each tab (37) is connected to the respective lateral wall (33) along a transverse fold line (19) extending along only part of the width of the tab (37), in that a cut (41) is also formed between the tab (37) and the lateral wall (33).

21) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in one of Claims 17 to 20, wherein each tab (37) has a bevelled corner, so as to

leave the slot (36) partly open.

22) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in one of Claims 17 to 21, wherein each tab (37) comprises an appendix (42), which is located close to the top wall (31) of the lid (29), is connected to the tab (37) along an oblique fold line (43), and is folded 180° onto the tab (37).

23) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 22, wherein each inner container (3) is formed by folding a flat first blank (17) having two longitudinal fold lines (18), and a number of transverse fold lines (19) defining, between the two longitudinal fold lines (18), a first panel (8') forming a rear wall (8); a second panel (6') forming a bottom wall (6); and a third panel (7') forming a front wall (7).

24) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 23, wherein the third panel (7') has a reinforcing flap (20) connected to the third panel (7') along a transverse fold line (19), and which is folded 180° onto the third panel (7') to strengthen the top portion of the front wall (7).

25) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 23 or 24, wherein the first panel (8') has two first lateral wings (9'), which form respective inner portions of the lateral walls (9), are located on opposite sides of the first panel (8'), and are separated from the first panel (8') by the longitudinal fold

lines (18); and the third panel (7') has two second lateral wings (9''), which form respective outer portions of the lateral walls (9), are located on opposite sides of the third panel (7'), and are separated from the third panel (7') by the longitudinal fold lines (18).

26) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 25, wherein each first lateral wing (9') of the first panel (8') has a tab (21) separated from the first lateral wing (9') by a transverse fold line (19).

27) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 25 or 26, wherein a window (22) is formed in each first lateral wing (9') and contains a respective retaining tab (15); and each second lateral wing (9'') has a recess (23) located so as to be superimposed over a respective retaining tab (15).

28) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 27, wherein the outer container (4) is formed by folding a flat second blank (24) having two longitudinal fold lines (25), and a number of transverse fold lines (26) defining, between the two longitudinal fold lines (25), a first panel (11') forming an inner portion of a bottom wall (11); a second panel (12') forming a lateral wall (12); a third panel (10') forming a top wall (10); a fourth panel (12'') forming another lateral wall (12); and a fifth panel (11'') forming an outer portion of the bottom wall (11).

29) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 28, wherein the third panel (10') has two reinforcing flaps (27), which are located on opposite sides of the third panel (10'), are separated from the third panel (10') by the longitudinal fold lines (25), and are folded 180° onto the third panel (10') to strengthen the top wall (10).

30) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 28 or 29, wherein the second panel (12') and the fourth panel (12'') each have two retaining pockets (16), which are located on opposite sides of the relative panel (12', 12''), are separated from the relative panel (12', 12'') by the longitudinal fold lines (25), and are folded 180° onto the relative panel (12', 12'').

31) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 28, 29 or 30, wherein the first panel (11') has two connecting tabs (28), which are located on opposite sides of the first panel (11'), are separated from the first panel (11') by the longitudinal fold lines (25), and are folded 180° onto the first panel (11'); and each connecting tab (28) is glued to a bottom wall (6) of a respective inner container (3) to hinge the inner container (3) to the outer container (4).

32) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 31, wherein each inner container (3) is hinged to the outer container (4) by a connecting tab (28), which is hinged to the outer container (4) along the hinge (14) and glued to a bottom wall (6) of the inner container (3).

33) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 32, wherein the connecting tab (28) is glued to a wall (11, 12) of the outer container (4) using non-setting, re-stick adhesive.

34) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 32, wherein the connecting tab (28) is glued to a wall (11, 12) of the outer container (4) using weak-stick adhesive which releases its hold the first time the inner container (3) is extracted.

35) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 32, wherein the connecting tab (28) is fixed to a wall (11, 12) of the outer container (4) by a tear line which is torn the first time the inner container (3) is extracted.

36) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 31, wherein each inner container (3) is hinged to the outer container (4) by a connecting tab (28), which is hinged to the inner container (3) along the hinge (14) and glued to a wall (11, 12) of the outer container (4).

37) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 36, wherein the connecting tab (28) is glued to a wall (6, 9) of the inner container (3) using non-setting, re-stick adhesive.

38) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 36, wherein the connecting tab (28) is glued to a wall (6, 9) of the inner container (3) using weak-stick adhesive which

releases its hold the first time the inner container (3) is extracted.

39) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 36, wherein the connecting tab (28) is fixed to a wall (6, 9) of the inner container (3) by a tear line which is torn the first time the inner container (3) is extracted.

40) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 39, wherein the lateral walls (12) of the outer container (4) each have a recess (39) exposing the lateral walls (9) of the inner container (3) underneath.

41) A packet of cigarettes as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 40, and comprising a retaining member for holding the inner container (3) in the closed position.