

FAQ

Understanding E-Cigarettes: What Businesses Need to Know



What are e-cigarettes?

Electronic cigarettes (also called e-cigarettes or vaporizers) are devices that are utilized as an alternative to tobacco cigarettes. They are often designed to mimic the look of conventional cigarettes, though they can simulate other items such as pens. Unlike conventional cigarettes, e-cigarettes are typically battery-operated and contain various levels of nicotine, flavorings, and other chemicals. When the smoker puffs an e-cigarette, a vapor that resembles cigarette smoke is produced.

Are e-cigarettes safe?

E-cigarettes are a new and novel product. Therefore, the health consequences of e-cigarette use and exposure are unknown. There is currently no scientific evidence ascertaining the safety of e-cigarettes. Not a single brand of e-cigarettes has submitted their product to the FDA for a thorough safety evaluation. However, an FDA analysis of two popular e-cigarette brands showed inconsistent amounts of nicotine and traces of toxic cancer-causing substances (carcinogens). Due to this, the FDA issued a warning concerning the potential health risks associated with e-cigarette use until conclusive research can be gathered.

Can e-cigarettes cause secondhand smoke?

E-cigarettes don't cause secondhand smoke, they cause vapor. There is no evidence that shows the vapors produced by e-cigarettes are safe for inhalation by non-users. Due to the newness of electronic cigarettes, not enough time has elapsed to both conduct and evaluate the long-term effects of secondhand vapor exposure.

Should businesses be concerned about e-cigarette use in their facilities?

Since the Iowa SmokeFree Air Act was passed in 2008, there has been much effort to maintain clean air for every Iowan. The use of e-cigarettes in public places and workplaces may complicate the efforts to enforce smokefree laws. Since secondhand vapor has not been evaluated, the American Lung Association supports including e-cigarettes under smokefree laws.

What can I do to keep my business smoke-free?

Do not allow e-cigarette use. It is legal to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in your facilities/businesses. This would simplify enforcement efforts.

How does Iowa law treat e-cigarettes?

In May of 2014, HF2109 was passed to prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes to minors. The business sector is free to enforce their own rules about e-cigarette use in their facilities.

Can e-cigarettes be used to help smokers quit?

E-cigarettes are not FDA approved to help smokers quit. The U.S. Public Health Service has concluded that the most effective way to help smokers quit is to utilize any of the seven approved therapies in combination with individual, group, or phone cessation counseling. The American Lung Association does not support e-cigarette use for this purpose unless the FDA evaluates and approves a particular e-cigarette for use as a smoking aid.

