

# ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES



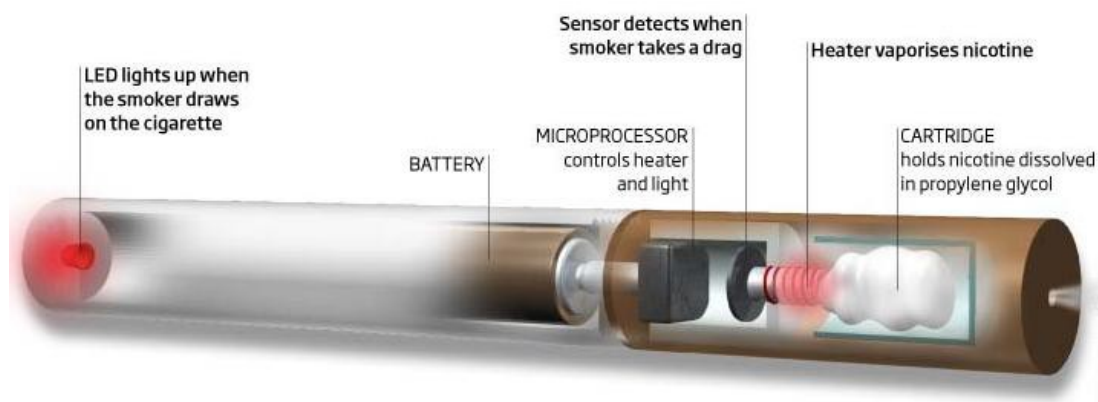
## TOBACCO & VAPOUR PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM

### What is an electronic cigarette [e-cigarette]?

E-cigarettes are appearing for sale in local stores, specialty stores, gas stations, and the internet across the health authority. They are marketed as a harmless product that “can be used anywhere” and that may help smokers quit. Much is still unknown about these devices, but one thing is clear: **e-cigarettes are not recommended for use and are not appropriate in smoke free areas, inside or out.**

E-cigarettes have two main components:

1. A battery operated delivery system with a micro-chip and atomizer that vapourizes a liquid chemical solution to mimic the appearance of smoke.
2. A cartridge containing a liquid solution consisting of a number of chemicals, some of which may cause cancer. Cartridges may also contain nicotine. Nicotine e-cigarettes are not authorized for sale in Canada, but are still available in some stores and on the internet.



Adapted from: Health Canada Therapeutic Products Directorate, Health Products and Food Branch presentation: *Regulatory Status of Electronic Cigarette Products.*

### Are e-cigarettes safe to use?

Safety concerns have been raised for users and those who are exposed to e-cigarette vapours. In fact, Health Canada, the World Health Organization and the US Federal Drug Administration have joined other health organizations in issuing warnings against the use of e-cigarettes. The health impact of repeatedly inhaling e-cigarette chemicals is unknown, and individuals exposed to e-cigarette vapours may be at risk of asthma attacks or other lung irritations.

Even though nicotine cartridges are not permitted for sale in Canada, they are found in some stores and are available via the internet. Cases of nicotine over exposure have been reported through ingestion, skin contact, and accidental spills. These dangers are particularly significant for children and animals. Products vary widely in the amount of nicotine & other chemicals they deliver. The list of chemicals used in the fluid is not fully disclosed and there are no labelling requirements.

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Nanaimo, BC V9S 1H1  
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Courtenay, BC V9N 1S4  
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Campbell River, BC V9W 8C6  
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## Are there age restrictions on the sale of e-cigarettes?

Yes. Any adult over the age of 19 can purchase a vapour product. Sales to a minor are illegal.

As of September 1, 2016, the province of British Columbia updated several laws that govern the sale and use of tobacco products and broadened the legislation to include vapour products. These products are defined as:

- **e-cigarette** means the following:
  - (a) a product or device, whether or not it resembles a cigarette, containing an electronic or battery-powered heating element capable of vapourizing an e-substance for inhalation or release into the air;
  - (b) a prescribed product or device similar in nature or use to a product or device described in paragraph (a);
- **"e-substance"** means a solid, liquid or gas
  - (a) that, on being heated, produces a vapour for use in an e-cigarette, regardless of whether the solid, liquid or gas contains nicotine, and
  - (b) that is not a controlled substance within the meaning of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (Canada);

Both the device and the e-substance are subject to the similar restrictions as tobacco products on sale, display, promotion and use.

Vapour products cannot be advertised or displayed in stores where those under 19 years of age have access.

- **If a store allows all ages to enter**, then the vapour products, any advertisements for vapour products or promotional materials must not be visible to minors. Within the store, retailers can inform customers about vapour products for sale by using basic signs with general information such the price range of single use or refillable products.
- **If a store only allows 19+ individuals to enter**, then they may have vapour products and promotions out on display. However, they must ensure that people looking into the store from outside cannot see the vapour products or their advertisements.

## What are the restrictions on using vapour products outdoors?

The legislation expands the previous zone to six-metres around all doorways, air intakes and open windows to any substantially enclosed public and work places in B.C and includes the use of vapour products. There must be a six-metre area around any doorway, air intake or open window to any public or work place in which no one can stand and use tobacco or vapour products. This protects against emissions entering these places and protects people as they enter or exit. **\*In the Capital Regional District, the no-smoking zone is seven metres for tobacco products.**

Vaping is not permitted in places that may be considered public or workplaces include stores, offices, and entrances to condominiums/apartment buildings, work vehicles (e.g., delivery vans), public transit, taxis, cafes, casinos and pubs/bars.

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/keeping-bc-healthy-safe/tobacco-regulation/requirements-under-the-tobacco-and-vapour-products-control-act-and-regulation.pdf>

In the Capital Regional District, the Clean Air Bylaw does not include e-cigarettes.

## Will e-cigarettes help me quit?

There is inconclusive evidence that e-cigarettes help smokers quit or that they are safe to use as a cessation aid. Nicotine gums, patches, lozenges and inhalers, as well as various prescription medications have been proven to be safe and effective cessation aids.

**Island Health does not recommend using e-cigarettes as a tobacco cessation aid. For more information, contact your local Island Health Tobacco & Vapour Prevention and Control Office.**