

Fact Sheet on Electronic Cigarettes

Information below is taken from a letter from the Office on Smoking and Health, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). August 6, 2014.

- E-cigarettes are part of a class of products often referred to as electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), which are battery-powered devices that provide doses of nicotine and other additives to the user in an aerosol. ¹ There are currently multiple types of ENDS on the U.S. market, including e-cigarettes, e-hookahs, hookah pens, vape pens, e-cigars, and others. Some of these products are disposable varieties, while others can be refilled or recharged for repeated use.
- Since ENDS are not yet regulated as tobacco products under the Tobacco Control Act, we have very little information about the ingredients of liquids (purity, impurities or stability), or the approximate exposure to harmful and potentially harmful constituents when using electronic cigarettes over the short-term or long-term. To date, manufacturers are not required to publish what chemicals are in the ENDS solution, or to perform or reveal results from systematic testing. Studies have demonstrated wide variability in design, operation, and contents and emissions of carcinogens, other toxicants, and nicotine from ENDS. ⁵
- Depending on the brand, ENDS cartridges typically contain nicotine, a component to produce the aerosol (e.g., propylene glycol or glycerol), and flavorings (e.g., fruit, mint, or chocolate). ²
- Potentially harmful constituents also have been documented in some ENDS, including: irritants, toxins that can change genes, and other ingredients that have been shown to cause cancer in animals. ²
- ENDS aerosol is not "water vapor." The aerosol emitted contains nicotine, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and can contain additional toxins. ³
- All ENDS have the potential to involuntarily expose children and adolescents, pregnant women, and non-users to aerosolized nicotine. ⁴
- For non-smokers, nicotine is an acute irritant, potentially causing headache, nausea, and discomfort. Nicotine exposure during adolescence may have lasting adverse consequences for brain development. ⁵ Pregnant women can transfer nicotine to their developing fetus, which can be toxic. ⁵

References

1. CDC (2013). "Notes from the field: electronic cigarette use among middle and high school students - United States, 2011-2012." MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 62(35): 729-730.
2. Cobb, N. K., M. J. Byron, D. B. Abrams and P. G. Shields (2010). "Novel nicotine delivery systems and public health: the rise of the "e-cigarette"." Am J Public Health 100(12): 2340-2342.
3. Goniewicz, M. L., J. Knysak, M. Gawron, L. Kosmider, A. Sobczak, J. Kurek, A. Prokopowicz, M. Jablonska-Czapla, C. Rosik-Dulewska, C. Havel, P. Jacob, N. Benowitz (2014). "Levels of selected carcinogens and toxicants in vapour from electronic cigarettes." Tob Control 23(2): 133-139.
4. CDC Letter, section II. Toxicant exposure to non-users. 2014
5. CDC (2014). Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs — 2014. Atlanta (GA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.

- [Operations » Utility Vehicles](#)
- [By the Numbers](#)
- [Park Bench](#)
- [Community Center » Notable News](#)
- [Community Center » NRPA Connect](#)
- [Community Center » Sensory Trail](#)

Share

2

Health & Wellness

Smoke-Free Parks: A Win-Win for Everyone

2014-12-01, Department, by Sue Beatty

On June 17, 2014, the El Paso (Texas) City Council approved changes to a smoke-free ordinance that was originally passed in 2001. Two ordinance changes affected the city's park and recreation system. The first was that beginning January 1, 2015, smoking will be banned on all city-owned or city-leased properties, including parks. The second was that electronic cigarettes are banned wherever smoking is banned. What this means is that beginning in 2015, there will be no smoking of any kind (including "vaping," as smoking e-cigarettes is known) allowed in El Paso city parks.



Exposure to secondhand smoke is unhealthy, even in outdoor spaces. Studies have found that levels of secondhand smoke in outdoor areas can be equal to amounts found inside where smoking is allowed. The U.S. Surgeon General's report in 2010 concluded there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke, which causes almost 3,000 deaths from lung cancer and 46,000 deaths from heart disease every year in the United States. Exposure to concentrated amounts of secondhand smoke outdoors can cause respiratory irritation and may trigger asthma attacks.

Cigarette butts are the most commonly littered item in the United States with more than 175 million pounds littered every year. Cigarette butts can remain in the environment for years and contain toxic ingredients that cause problems when ingested by children, pets or marine life.

The purpose of the El Paso Parks and Recreation Department is to provide indoor and outdoor leisure services to persons of all ages so they can develop skills, socialize, experience nature, relax and live a healthier lifestyle. Having smoke-free parks will help to ensure this purpose is met. In March 2013, the problem of smoking in parks was highlighted by the El Paso Clean Air Coalition. This group of dedicated individuals spent a Saturday morning at one of El Paso's most popular parks. The group placed a red flag at every spot they found a cigarette butt. They were armed with 500 flags and

quickly ran out. The flags were retrieved, and the team gathered in another part of the park and again used all 500 flags. Most alarming was the number of cigarette butts found in and around the playground.

Shortly afterward, members of the coalition approached the park and recreation department leadership to discuss the issue and gain the needed support to improve the current smoke-free ordinance to include a smoking ban in parks. The parks' leadership was immediately onboard and shared their dedication to offering the residents of El Paso a safe, healthy place to play. The issue was discussed with the neighborhood association leadership, who also pledged their support. Finally, coalition members engaged the general public about the issue at health fairs and events throughout the city. More than 1,000 endorsements were gathered from residents pledging their support of smoke-free parks. Letters of support also came in from area agencies such as the El Paso Medical Society, YMCA, Alpha Youth Leadership Academy, Creative Kids and the Housing Authority of El Paso.

Coalition members then took this information to individual members of the El Paso City Council in advance of the ordinance being placed on the city council agenda. Each city representative was visited and provided with information about the dangers of outdoor secondhand smoke, cigarette butt litter, electronic smoking devices and other information to be included in the proposed ordinance changes. The Department of Public Health director addressed the city council and asked for their vote to update the smoke-free ordinance. He stressed the need for parks that are free of smoke and the need to include a ban of electronic cigarettes in the same places that smoking is banned. Opponents of the ordinance change collected hundreds of signatures and made numerous pleas to the council to not support the proposed change. In all, more than 40 community members, pro and con, voiced their opinions to the city council. Despite the opposition (which was primarily about adding e-cigarettes to the smoking ban), the new ordinance changes passed with a vote of 6-1.

El Paso is proud to be a leader in smoke-free policy. In 2001, the city council passed one of the strongest smoke-free policies in the nation. The University of Texas at El Paso is a tobacco-free campus, and there are several local hospitals that have tobacco-free policies for their campuses as well. The updated, improved ordinance that passed in June 2014 will again move El Paso to the national forefront through the implementation and enforcement of a comprehensive smoke-free law that will protect our residents, including their children and pets.

The next step will be to educate the public about the new law. This will be done in several ways. The Department of Public Health will issue a press release in December 2014 reminding El Paso residents that beginning in January 2015, all city parks will be smoke-free. The park and recreation department will post no-smoking signs at every park and make an announcement on their website. Park and recreation department employees will have an opportunity to attend an in-service program regarding the ordinance changes and to learn the best ways to approach smokers and enforce the new law. Luckily, it has been found that most smoke-free ordinances are self-enforcing once the public is aware of the law.

Department of Public Health Director Robert Resendes states, "This is truly a victory for the people of El Paso who expect to step outside their homes every day and breathe clean air, free from smoke, nicotine and any other contaminants caused by smoking and vaping."

Park and Recreation Department Director Tracy Novak adds, "Our primary concern in delivering our mission is to provide a safe environment for our users. This updated ordinance sends a strong message of leadership that we will not risk the public health of our young people and families due to cigarettes

[and] their residue, as well as the new risk that vaping represents. Some of our most vulnerable residents are children at playgrounds, and this new ordinance protects them.”

Sue Beatty is the Health Education Manager for the City of El Paso Department of Public Health.

Comments

Name:

User Email:

Comment:





Type the text

[Privacy & Terms](#)

Comment

- [NRPA Connect](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Linkedin](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [RSS](#)

22377 Belmont Ridge Road Ashburn, VA 20148-4501 800.626.NRPA (6772)

© 1997- 2014 NRPA. All Rights Reserved.