

# ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES: INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS

## *What are electronic cigarettes?*

- ◆ Vapes or electronic-cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are battery operated devices that contain nicotine, flavors, and other chemicals.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Illegal substances, such as marijuana, have been used in e-cigarette devices.
- ◆ E-cigarettes give off a vapor instead of smoke. The vapor comes from heating a liquid.
- ◆ E-cigarettes are available in different flavors, such as chocolate, strawberry and mint, which may appeal to young people.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ E-cigarettes are designed to look like and be used in the same way as regular cigarettes.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ They are also called vaporizer pens and hookah pens. Here are some examples:



## **Businesses are having a difficult time figuring out what to do about e-cigarettes.**

### *Here is what you need to know:*

- ◆ Existing tobacco laws do not apply to e-cigarettes.
- ◆ Some places have policies or are developing policies to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in enclosed areas. For example, the U.S. Department of Transportation interprets existing federal regulations against smoking on airplanes as also applying to the use of e-cigarettes.<sup>4</sup>
- ◆ Concerns have been raised by supervisors who may not be able to tell if someone is smoking a cigarette or using an e-cigarette.
- ◆ Establishing a policy frees employees from having to determine if someone is smoking or using an e-cigarette.
- ◆ It is up to each business to make up its own policy about e-cigarette use.
- ◆ Once an e-cigarette policy has been established for your business:
  - 1) Post the policy;
  - 2) Train your employees; and
  - 3) Enforce the policy.

**Do you or someone you know want to quit smoking?**

**FREE HELP is available by calling  
1-866-NEW-LUNG (1-866-639-5864)**

## ***Are there any health effects from using e-cigarettes?***

- ◆ Some e-cigarette brands have claimed they do not contain nicotine, but when tested, they have been found to contain some levels of nicotine.<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ Nicotine is the addictive chemical that makes it hard to quit smoking.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Some e-cigarettes have also been found to contain a chemical called diethylene glycol, a toxic chemical used in antifreeze.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Other samples have been found to contain some of the same cancer-causing chemicals that are in regular cigarettes.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ In some studies, exposure to e-cigarette vapor for just 5 minutes caused narrowing of the airway, which can make it hard to breathe.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ There is no proof that e-cigarettes are safe for those who smoke or for those who breathe in the vapor.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ While the flavorings found in e-cigarettes are safe to consume, inhaling them may be harmful. Some of the flavorings have even been shown to be toxic.
- ◆ E-cigarettes are not an approved tool for quitting smoking.<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ Currently, e-cigarettes are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), so the safety and the purity of the devices are unknown.<sup>2</sup>

### **Sources:**

- <sup>1</sup> FDA Warns of Health Risks Posed by E-Cigarettes.  
[www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm173401.htm](http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm173401.htm)
- <sup>2</sup> FDA E-cigarettes: Questions and Answers.  
[www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm225210.htm](http://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm225210.htm)
- <sup>3</sup> Vardavas, CI et al. "short-Term Pulmonary Effects of Using an EC: Impact on Respiratory Flow Resistance, Impedance and Exhaled Nitric Oxide" Chest 2012 141(6):1400-1406
- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation Proposes to Ban the Use of Electronic Cigarettes on Aircraft  
<http://www.dot.gov/briefing-room/us-department-transportation-proposes-ban-use-electronic-cigarettes-aircraft>