NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Compliance Advisory

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
#2026-01 Issued:1/16/2026

Assistance for Schools, Institutions, Small Business on E-Cigarette/Vape Pen Management & Disposal

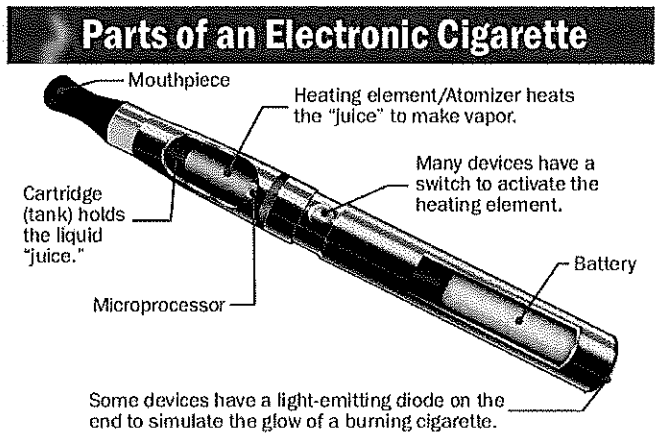
WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS ADVISORY?

Schools, public and private institutions, and small businesses throughout New Jersey.

WHY IS DEP ISSUING THIS ADVISORY?

The increasing use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) also known as e-cigs, vape pens, vapes, e-hookahs and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) has caused a disposal issue with these devices in schools, institutions and small businesses. An e-cigarette is made up of two major components, nicotine (e-juice) and a lithium-ion battery.

- Nicotine is highly toxic, can be absorbed through the skin, and may cause serious health effects like seizures or breathing issues. It's harmful to aquatic life and classified as acute hazardous waste (RCRA code **P075**).
- Lithium batteries pose a fire risk, especially if damaged in trash or recycling systems. They are considered ignitable and reactive hazardous waste (potential RCRA codes **D001** and **D003**).



WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Incorrectly disposing of nicotine and lithium-ion battery waste can have serious environmental impacts and public health safety issues. The improper disposal of these devices, even unknowingly, can have serious regulatory consequences.

Therefore, **DO NOT:**

- ✓ Put nicotine e-liquids down the drain.
- ✓ Rinse or wash e-liquids out of e-cigarettes.
- ✓ Put e-cigarettes or e-cigarette components (lithium-ion battery) in the trash or recycling bins.

What TO DO:

- ✓ Store individually in plastic bags or secure containers with inert material.
- ✓ Store away from heat and light.
- ✓ Post notices on/near trash receptacles to prevent/limit improper disposal.
- ✓ Schedule regular disposal with a licensed contractor to avoid stockpiling of devices.
- ✓ Keep in mind quantities of hazardous waste generation and applicable regulations.
- ✓ Manage hazardous waste properly to mitigate liability risks.

The websites listed below may be used as guidance to assist in disposing of this waste in a manner consistent with the Federal RCRA regulations.

Note: Cannabis vape pens/e-cigarettes should also be managed and disposed of properly due to the lithium-ion battery inside the device. Cannabis is not considered a hazardous waste, but the lithium-ion battery is as mentioned above.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

Bureau of Hazardous Waste Compliance and Enforcement

- Northern Field Office 973-656-4470
- Central Field Office 609-943-3019
- Southern Field Office 856-614-3658

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

https://www.epa.gov/hw/how-safely-dispose-e-cigarettes-information-schools-and-small-businesses#names

https://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/hw.html

https://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/docs/compliance-assistance-packet-2020-v20-3.pdf

This advisory is intended to be a summary explanation of a Department initiative, it does not include all potentially applicable requirements. If you have any questions related to compliance with this initiative, please contact the number listed above.