

# E-cigarettes to be regulated in US

WASHINGTON: US regulators proposed new restrictions on the US\$2bn market in e-cigarettes, which until now have been free from federal regulation.



E-cigarettes are to be regulated in the US with free samples being banned at concerts and other events according to regulator Kathleen Sebelius. Image: Wikipedia

The changes would apply to other, previously unregulated tobacco products, including cigars, hookahs, nicotine gels, and pipe tobacco, and are aimed at keeping these substances away from young people.

"This proposed rule is the latest step in our efforts to make the next generation tobacco-free," said Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in a press release announcing the reform.

The proposal by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would bring these products under many of the same rules that already apply to traditional cigarettes.

Sellers would be required to enforce a minimum age restriction on those who wish to buy the products, including requiring identification.

Companies would be barred from handing out free samples, and would be required to include health warning labels and to seek FDA approval before marketing a new product.

## Products must be registered

They would have to register with the FDA and provide details about their ingredients.

And they would be prevented from advertising a lower health risk, compared with traditional cigarettes, unless the FDA confirms scientific evidence backing up the claim.

"Tobacco-related disease and death is one of the most critical public health challenges before the FDA," said Mitch Zeller, director of that agency's Centre for Tobacco Products.

"The proposed rule would give the FDA additional tools to protect the public health in today's rapidly evolving tobacco marketplace," he added in the statement.

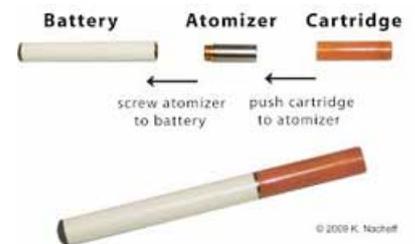
But the rules do not restrict advertising of e-cigarettes, nor do they ban the special flavours, such as Cherry Crush or Chocolate Treat, that some say are designed to appeal to children.

E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that deliver vaporised nicotine into an aerosol inhaled by the user.

Their use by young people has been booming: a December study by the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 10% of high school students had used e-cigarettes.

## Children

Many manufacturers offer special flavours and most have provided free samples at hundreds of events, including youth-



How the e-cigarette works to give users nicotine vapour. Image: [SAS China](#)

oriented concerts, and broadcast TV or radio advertising.

The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has also reported a spike in calls to poison control centres about accidents involving the nicotine-filled bottles used to refill the e-cigarettes.

More than half the calls involved children under age five who had swallowed, inhaled or spilled the liquid on their skin or in their eyes.

The move to regulate was welcomed as a critical step for public health by the president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Matthew Myers, but he said it was "long overdue" and not enough.

The new rule comes under the framework of a 2009 law that gave the FDA authority to regulate the manufacture, distribution, and marketing of tobacco products. Myers said the agency should have used its powers much sooner to cover e-cigarettes.

"It is inexcusable that it has taken the FDA and the administration so long to act," he said, urging US regulators to finalise the rule and put it into effect within the year.

Myers also noted it does not ban flavourings in cigars or e-cigarettes that may appeal to youth, nor does it curtail any of the egregious marketing for e-cigarettes.

"The FDA must now move quickly to develop additional regulations addressing these important issues," he said.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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