



Indiana
Department
of
Health

VAPE WASTE AND THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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JANELLE TULLEY | PTA MEMBER/TREASURER

06/09/2025

OUR MISSION:

**To promote, protect, and improve
the health and safety of all Hoosiers.**

OUR VISION:

**Every Hoosier reaches optimal health
regardless of where they live, learn,
work, or play.**



Learning Objectives

1. To understand the importance of safer disposal of vapes
2. To recognize key tobacco, environmental, and school considerations when addressing this issue
3. To learn from local communities who are currently working on vape disposal in schools

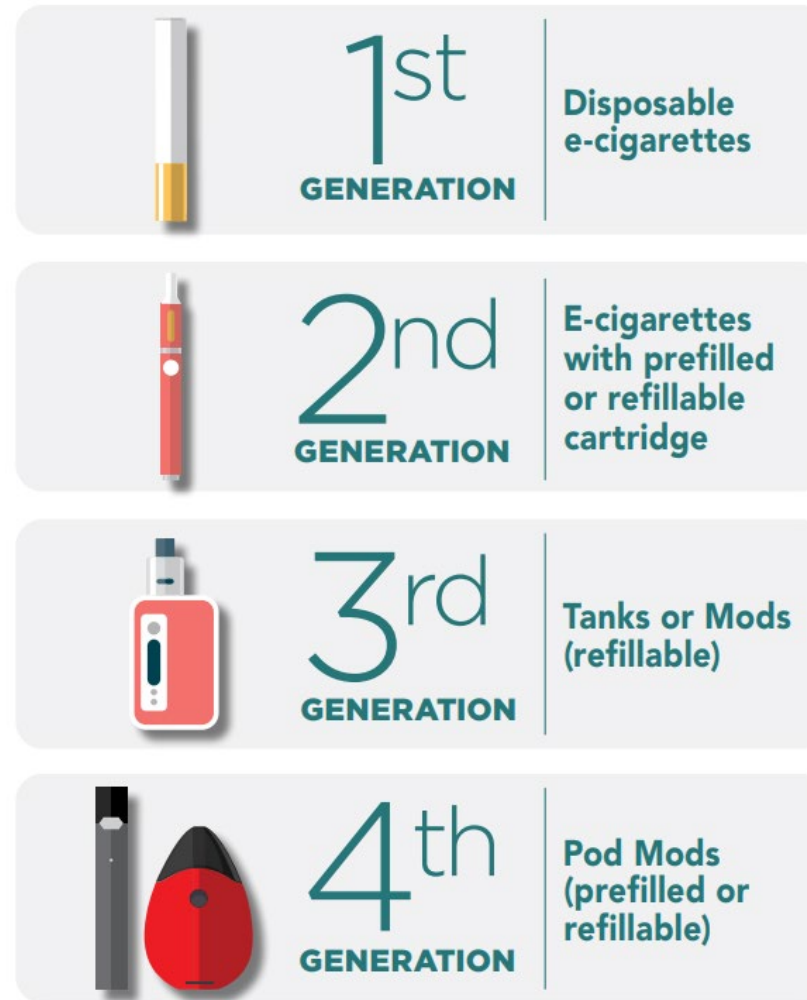


Vape Waste

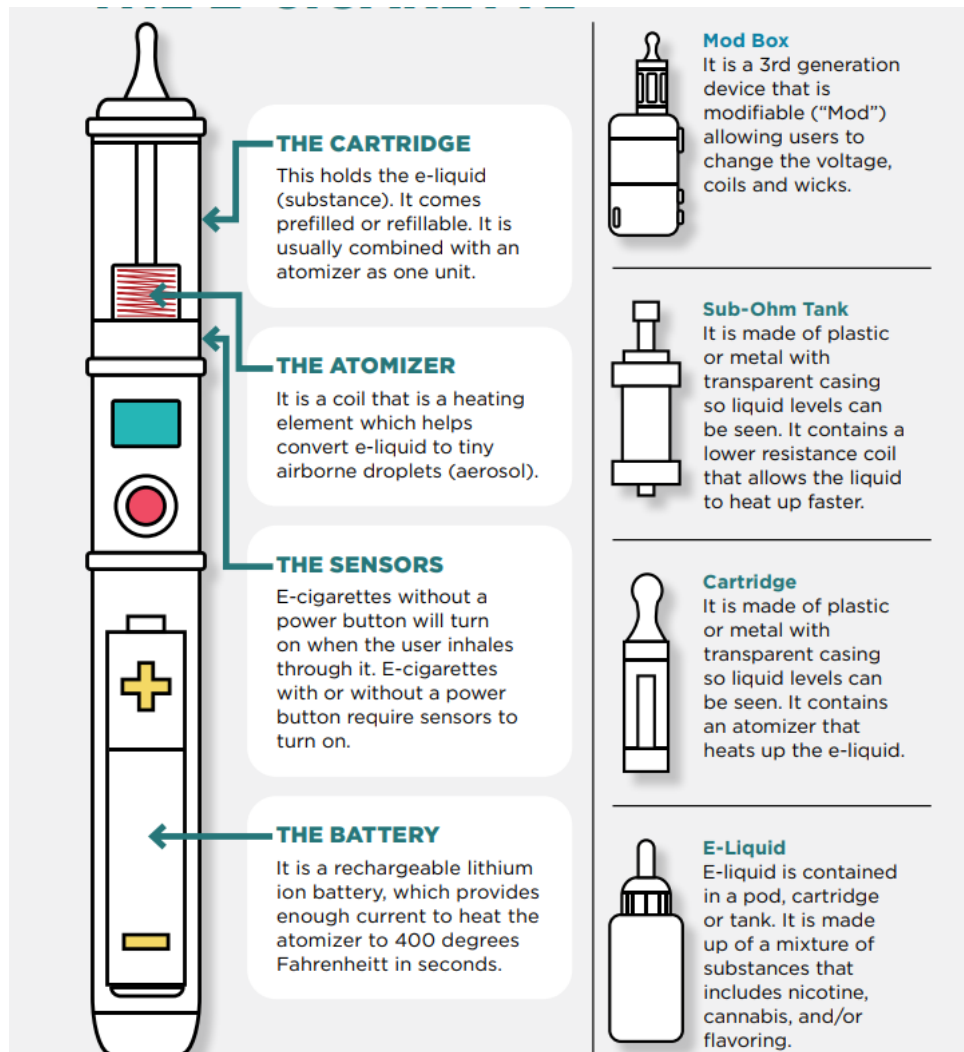


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Evolution of Vapes



Anatomy of Vapes



What is Vape Waste?

Vapes have multiple waste streams:

Plastic waste

- Vape casings and cartridges

Electronic waste

- Circuitry
- Atomizer
- Sensors

Hazardous waste

- Nicotine and nicotine salts
- Toxic metals
- Lithium-ion batteries (universal waste)

How is Vape Waste Affecting Schools?

Schools are accumulating vapes for various reasons.

- Confiscating from students
- Voluntary, anonymous surrendering
- Finding on school grounds

Other issues:

- Plumbing
- Fires

Importance of Safer Vape Disposal

Multiple hazards associated with vape waste:



Health



Acute Toxicity



Flammable



Reactive



Environment

Tobacco Considerations

- Lifespan of vapes
 - Most reusable vapes last 6-8 months
 - Disposable vapes are single use
- Complications with disposable vapes
 - Most common type of vape used by youth
 - Most users discard them in the trash
 - Batteries within disposables can not be easily separated
- Complications with other substances
 - Cannabis & THC
 - Other substances

Other Key Considerations



Panel of Experts

Environmental Considerations:

Andrew Pappas, MPH

Deputy Assistant Commissioner

Indiana Department of
Environmental Management

Office of Land Quality

School Considerations:

Dr. Chad Crews

School Safety Specialist

Indiana Department of Education
School Safety

Janelle Tulley

PTA Member/Treasurer & Parent
Fort Wayne Area PTA Council

Audience Q&A

Any questions for our panelists?

Other Local Examples



Allen County Health Department: Vape Waste Disposal Program in Schools

- Partnership with local fire department and local department of environmental management
- Started because of a lithium-ion battery fire from a vape in a local school
- Issues with schools affording the necessary supplies and services for safer handling, storage, and disposal
- Pilot program started in Fall 2024: Middle and high schools received a kit of two large buckets with sand and safety bags along with instructions on how to safely handle and store the vapes and when they need to be transported to recycling facility to be disposed.
- School Resource Officer transports the bucket of vapes to the recycling center
- Tracking process was set up at the recycling center to collect data from each school that drops off vapes
- Recycling center sends Allen County Health Department an invoice and report on what was dropped off
- Funding: Allen County Health Department covered the cost with Health First Indiana funds
- Future: Plan to continue this in the next school year if funds allow

Allen County Contact Information

Mindy Waldron

Department Administrator/Deputy Health Commissioner

Phone: 260-449-7578

Email: Mindy.Waldron@allencounty.us

Tobacco Free Lake County Indiana: Vape Waste Collection Program in Schools

- School administrators were not aware that vapes were hazardous or how to safely handle them
- Realized there was no unified and consistent process for counties or municipalities on collecting, storing, or disposing of vapes
- Had conversations with local solid waste management and a hazardous waste company to seek out a strategy
- Original concern around accepting disposable vapes that could lead to issues dismantling the vape
- Received approval from hazardous waste company on an appropriate collection container
- In partnership with Lake County's SAFE Coalition, they created a vape disposal safe handling guide
- Complete kit includes – vape disposal box, gloves, plastic bags, guide, agreement form, and additional resources



Prepared and distributed **50** vape disposal boxes to schools, organizations, and law enforcement.

Lake County Contact Information

Irene Boone Phillips

Tobacco Free Program Coordinator, Franciscan Health

Phone: 219-712-3748

Email: Irene.BoonePhillips@franciscanalliance.org

Vape Waste Group



Vape Waste Group Efforts

- **Stakeholders involved:**

- Indiana Department of Health (Tobacco Prevention and Cessation, Local Health Services, Environmental Public Health)
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management (Office of Land Quality, Office of Program Support)
- Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission
- Indiana Department of Education (School Safety)
- Family and Social Services Administration (Department of Mental Health and Addiction)

- **Working on creating helpful resources for schools**

- Guidance on safer disposal of vapes
- School survey

Call to Action



What Can Schools Do?

- Educate your school community on vape waste
- Follow proper handling and storage procedures
- Understand what the disposal options are in your community
- Identify opportunities for collaboration in your community
- Complete our school survey that will help inform how we can better support schools

VAPE-FREE INDIANA

Indiana's **Multi-Pronged Approach** to addressing the youth vaping epidemic

PREVENTION & INTERVENTION

School Programming

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mass-Media Campaigns

CESSATION

Quitting Services

Prevention

CATCH[®]
MY BREATH
YOUTH E-CIGARETTE PREVENTION PROGRAM



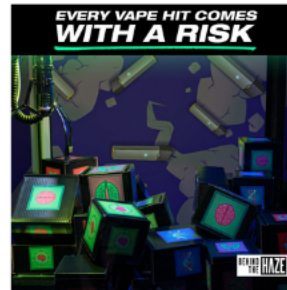
Stanford
MEDICINE | Tobacco Prevention Toolkit

Alternative to Suspension

Public Health Law Center
**STUDENT COMMERCIAL
TOBACCO USE IN SCHOOLS**
Alternative Measures

Stanford
MEDICINE | Tobacco Prevention Toolkit

**American
Lung Association.**
INDEPTH.



Behind the Haze
Youth Campaign

@BehindtheHazeIN
BehindtheHaze.com



Don't Puff This Stuff
Youth Campaign

@IHSAA
dontpuffthisstuff.com

Live Vape Free
LiveVapeFree.com

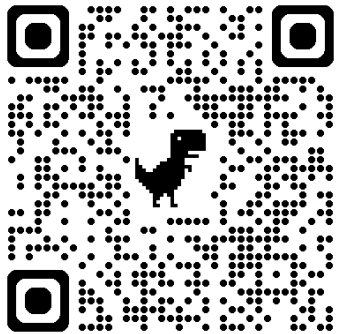
Quit Now Indiana
Text READY to 34191

EX Program:
Text **EXPROGRAM** to 88709

in.gov/VapeFreeIndiana

Vape Free Indiana Website

- Tobacco/vaping resources
 - Vape Free Schools Toolkit
 - Upcoming trainings
 - Subscribe to our newsletter



<https://www.in.gov/vapefreeindiana/>



Resources for Schools

- School Guidance Resource (coming soon)
- School Survey (coming soon)
- EPA school [guidance](#)
- Public Health Law Center (PHLC) [FAQ for Schools](#)
- Youth [curriculum](#) on environmental impacts of tobacco
- Youth cessation options
 - [Live Vape Free](#)
 - [Quit Now Indiana](#)
 - [EX Program](#)



EPA School Guidance



PHLC FAQs for Schools



Environmental Impacts Curriculum



Quitting Resources for Youth

Questions?

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