

## Vaping at work

When vaping was introduced in 2004, it was marketed as a “safe” alternative to smoking or a step used by smokers to transition to nonsmokers. It wasn’t until 2008 that agencies such as the World Health Organization and later the U.S. Food and Drug Administration began seriously challenging such marketing claims. Today the FDA’s official stance is that e-cigarettes aren’t an approved smoking cessation tool and can pose health dangers just as serious as cigarettes.

While the FDA classifies e-cigarettes as tobacco products, there’s no tobacco in the vape system. Vaping typically consists of a liquid known as e-liquid used to create a flavor. The cartridges of liquid can be refilled or thrown away. The e-cigarette is powered with a rechargeable battery, which activates a heating system. The heating system turns the liquid into a vapor, and the user inhales that vapor through a mouthpiece.

Since vaping isn’t a healthy habit, you may want to address it, as many of you have addressed tobacco use through policies and programs. To update policies:

- Have your legal counsel determine what the laws regarding vaping are in your city or state.
- Review your current tobacco usage policies. If your policy bans smoking or tobacco products, it doesn’t cover e-cigarettes.
- Using the information you’ve gathered, redraft your policy to include your agreed-upon rules around e-cigarette usage on company property.
- Once your policy changes have gone through your approval process, make sure you communicate to your employees clearly.



To help your employees who are ready to quit using tobacco, including e-cigarettes and vaping products, promote the Blue Cross Tobacco Coaching program, powered by WebMD<sup>®</sup>, to them. You can find the toolkit of communication materials at [bcbsm.com/engage](https://bcbsm.com/engage) in the *Health and well-being programs* folder.

Sources: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)\*, [truthinitiative.org](https://www.truthinitiative.org)\*, [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)\*, [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)\*

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