

Officials ‘plugging loopholes’ in proposed Hong Kong ban on e-cigarettes, as industry vows opposition

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October 10, 2018

Officials are exploring ways to plug possible loopholes and close off access to e-cigarettes or new smoking products – especially for young people – following an announcement by Hong Kong’s leader of a proposed ban on such items.

HK Business Briefing

On Wednesday, tobacco industry players and consumers expressed disappointment and vowed to oppose the ban raised by Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor.

Lam’s suggestion, among a series of health care initiatives announced in her [second policy address](#), marked a U-turn from an [earlier proposal](#) aimed at regulating the products in the same manner as conventional cigarettes.

Hong Kong to impose full ban on e-cigarettes and other new tobacco products

The ban on the import, manufacture, sale, distribution and advertisement of e-cigarettes and other new smoking products was to protect the health of Hongkongers, particularly children and teenagers, Lam stressed.

In her policy address report, Lam stated there was also “a lack of sufficient evidence to prove the products can help quit smoking”. The report further said “the public may underestimate the harmful effects of these products”. A government source said the city’s leader settled on a full ban as there was strong public opinion over the issue.



At present, there are no laws prohibiting the import or use of e-cigarettes and other new smoking products in Hong Kong. Consumers can also buy small quantities of the items from elsewhere and bring them into the city for self-use.

“We are worried this may be a loophole [even after the ban comes into effect],” another government source said, adding that authorities were looking into the matter and aimed to submit a proposal to the Legislative Council in the current legislative term.

But the law, if passed, would not ban possession of such products, meaning in designated areas users could still consume items that were previously bought, the source said.

Why Hong Kong ban on e-cigarettes is wrong – they helped me quit tobacco

Tobacco industry members however said the government’s decision was unfortunate and some vowed to oppose the ban.

“We will resist till the end. The resistance is not for ourselves, but for all Hongkongers,” said Joe Lo, convenor of a group that supports the use of heat-not-burn products, adding he felt angry with the government’s proposal.

We will resist till the end. The resistance is not for ourselves, but for all Hongkongers

Joe Lo, e-cigarette supporter

“The government has ignored scientific evidence and social problems brought about by a total ban,” Lo added, pointing to the reversal of an earlier, “balanced” decision to allow and regulate the novel products in line with international practice.

He said his group had not decided on their next course of action to show their dissatisfaction.

The Asian Vape Association, which consists of around 20 local e-cigarettes businesses and organisations, said they were up in arms over what they called an unfair decision, criticising the government for forcing a quit-or-die approach on smokers.

Nav Lalji, chairman of the association, said the initiative will only encourage people to smoke traditional cigarettes.

If the legislation is enacted, the industry is expected to take a hit, with shops closing overnight while the products surfacing on the black market, according to Lalji.

Tobacco giant Philip Morris Asia, which sells conventional cigarettes as well as heat-not-burn products, said it was an unfortunate move.

Stubbing out demand: sale of e-cigarettes set to be regulated

A company spokeswoman said she believed the concerns over youth access to the products could be addressed through proper regulation and education.

The government first floated the idea of a total ban on e-cigarettes in 2015, and intended to submit a legislative proposal in 2016/2017. But the move was held back based on studies

by related departments.

A plan, aimed at regulating items in a same manner as conventional tobacco products, was raised by authorities in June this year. But it failed to impress parties from both sides – the tobacco industry argued the proposal was too harsh on innovative products, while health experts said the rules were too lax on what were considered harmful goods.

More smokers in Hong Kong turning to e-cigarettes, survey reveals

The Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health, an anti-smoking group, said on Wednesday it welcomed the administration's drive to safeguard public health.

"We have been pushing for this since 2015 and we are glad to see that the government has finally come to realise the urgency," a spokesman said.

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Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health

In a press release, the group urged authorities to enact the legislation with no further delay.

"We press for immediate review because new smoking products will only continue to emerge with time," the spokesman added.

The Academy of Medicine, a specialists' training institute in the city, expressed satisfaction with the latest policy, noting it was the result of the medical community's push to oppose e-cigarettes and other new smoking products over the past few months.

"The academy reiterates that it is utterly wrong to say that electronic smoking devices are less addictive and pose less threat to one's health than traditional cigarettes," it said in a statement.

The academy added that to combat misconceptions about such products, "a complete ban on e-cigarettes is the only way to go".

Vaping and e-cigarettes in Hong Kong: dangerous, or a safe way to quit?

Other health care measures announced by Lam in her policy address included a free human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination scheme for schoolgirls in Primary Five and Six, who are usually aged 10 or 11. The move is part of the fight against cervical cancer, the seventh most common cancer among local women in 2015.

Another plan centred on public hospitals allowing parents in a miscarriage to claim a fetus under 24 weeks for burial or cremation. Lam said authorities are also looking into providing facilities to handle such matters. Currently a miscarried fetus under the 24-week gestation mark is considered an abortus and disposed of as medical waste.

Additional reporting by Gary Cheung

This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as: Proposed e-cigarettes ban raises industry ire

Hong Kong to Ban e-Cigarettes, Other New Smoking Products

 [nytimes.com/aponline/2018/10/10/world/asia/ap-as-hong-kong-e-cigarette-ban.html](https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2018/10/10/world/asia/ap-as-hong-kong-e-cigarette-ban.html)

By The Associated Press

October 10, 2018

HONG KONG — Hong Kong plans to ban e-cigarettes and other new smoking products to protect public health, the leader of the semi-autonomous Chinese territory said Wednesday.

Carrie Lam said in an annual policy address that her government was drawing up proposed legislation to forbid the import, manufacture, sale, distribution and advertisement of products used in the pastime known as vaping.

E-cigarettes typically contain the stimulant nicotine and there is little research on their long-term effects, including whether they help smokers quit. The rise in teenagers using e-cigarettes has alarmed health officials in the United States who worry users will become addicted and be more likely to try cigarettes.

The use of vaping devices has been widely criticized and more than two dozen countries have already banned them. Numerous local governments in the U.S. have also sought to limit their availability, concerned especially about the possibility that young people will become addicts and begin using tobacco.

Worldwide, the market for cigarettes is declining, although mainland China remains the largest producer and consumer of tobacco products, with more than half of the country's men regular smokers. In Hong Kong, bans on smoking in public places have significantly reduced consumption and the mainland has followed in recent years by forcing smokers outdoors.

Lam's speech focused on improving quality of life in Hong Kong, where education, health care, youth employment and the high cost of housing are key concerns.


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Among the new policies announced is a plan to build new housing units that could provide homes for more than 1 million people.

Lam did not touch on controversial political issues in the territory, where Beijing has increasingly tightened its grip since Hong Kong's handover from British to Chinese rule in 1997.

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October 9, 2018



Hong Kong is set to impose a complete ban on e-cigarettes and other new tobacco products in an unexpected U-turn by the government, which had previously proposed only to restrict their sale to minors.

The initiative will be announced by Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor in her policy address on Wednesday, as she responds to myriad social concerns with nearly 250 initiatives aimed at tackling issues such as housing, land supply, health care, welfare and livelihood.

Sources told the *Post* the ban would cover electronic cigarettes as well as other new tobacco alternatives such as heat-not-burn products and herbal cigarettes.

Why Hong Kong ban on e-cigarettes is wrong – they helped me quit tobacco

Until now, the government had committed only to regulating e-cigarettes in the same way as conventional tobacco products, but health minister Sophia Chan Siu-chee had left the door open for “more stringent measures” depending on what medical evidence had to say about health effects.



However, a source familiar with the Food and Health Bureau expressed shock at the move, saying the previous administration had listed many technical problems with implementing a full ban.

Former health chief Dr Ko Wing-man had intended to introduce a total ban in 2016, but studies by related departments suggested that such a move would be “quite problematic”.

The previous year the government proposed a full ban on e-cigarettes, meaning prohibition of the import, manufacture, sale, distribution and advertising of such products. But the plan was watered down when a legislative proposal came out in June this year.

Stubbing out demand: sale of e-cigarettes set to be regulated

Worldwide, the use of e-cigarettes – known as vaping – has become a multibillion-dollar industry with hundreds of brands. In Hong Kong, vaping products are found in trendy shopping malls frequented by youngsters in areas such as Mong Kok and Causeway Bay, and cost between HK\$100 (US\$12.80) and HK\$500.

The tobacco trade was quick to criticise the proposed ban.

Christine Hu, spokeswoman of the Coalition on Tobacco Affairs, an umbrella group of tobacco producers, said on Tuesday night that she was upset by the proposal because it would only boost illicit products in the underground market and failed to protect those under age 18.

“We are disappointed by the government’s selective and blind adoption of views expressed by certain groups, and ignored opinions from the industry and scientific data [about the products] from overseas,” she said.

On Tuesday, Lam said she would keep her speech short, leaving the details in a document that was about a fifth longer than her maiden policy blueprint last year. She will address Hong Kong’s legislature at about 11am, before a press conference in the afternoon, for

which she is setting aside more time.

The cover of her speech booklet is sky blue, like last year's, matching the colour she used in her campaign for Hong Kong's top job.

Lam's administration released a progress report on its achievements on Tuesday afternoon, claiming to have implemented 78 measures introduced in last year's policy address.

The report summed up the headway made in 10 "people-oriented initiatives", including provisions for more assistance to patients with uncommon diseases and the building of new public wet markets.

But it did not touch on pressing issues such as housing and land supply, and some lawmakers said progress on key social welfare and innovation issues had been "far too slow".

Lam revealed her government had received 12,800 submissions from the public for Wednesday's address, a third of which were about housing and land supply.

Island of hope: for crowded Hong Kong, a huge new island will be game changer

The *Post* has reported that as part of Lam's plans to ease the city's housing crisis, she is expected to set aside 70 per cent of new land, including a 1,000-hectare artificial island to be reclaimed to the east of Lantau, for public rental and subsidised housing.

She is also expected to speed up development of a new town in the northern New Territories, making 200 hectares of brownfield sites available much earlier for housing and other projects.

The policy address will also offer incentives to the maritime industry, including companies offering support services to shipping firms, to encourage them to make Hong Kong their base.

On innovation, the government is expected to announce details of plans to pair local universities with internationally renowned research institutions to develop more advanced research in biomedical technology, artificial intelligence and robotics.

The *Post* reported two weeks ago that the government had earmarked a Kwun Tong site for an academy to train 180,000 civil servants to improve the delivery of public services, an initiative the chief executive announced in her policy address last year.

Lam will provide an update on preparations for the civil service college when she speaks on Wednesday.

A person familiar with the plan said the government had identified a "government, institution or community" site near Kwun Tong MTR station for the civil service college.

Chinese passenger caught vaping in plane gets 5 days in detention

The Hong Kong Student Aid Society runs Holland Hostel, which provides residential services for young people, on the Kwun Tong site.

“The government is planning to redevelop the site to accommodate the future civil service college, and the social service facilities currently on the site,” the person said.

The college, which will focus on developing civil servants’ leadership and public communications abilities, will be modelled after similar institutions overseas, such as the Civil Service College of Singapore and the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

Additional reporting by Danny Mok

This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as: lam to reveal surprise ban on e-cigarettes

Hong Kong to ban e-cigarettes, other new smoking products

medicalxpress.com/news/2018-10-hong-kong-e-cigarettes-products.html



A video screen shows Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam delivering her policy speech at the Legislative Council in Hong Kong Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2018. Lam has unveiled a major reclamation project called "Lantau Tomorrow Vision," under [...more](#)

Hong Kong plans to ban e-cigarettes and other new smoking products to protect public health, the leader of the semi-autonomous Chinese territory said Wednesday.

Carrie Lam said in an annual policy address that her government was drawing up proposed legislation to forbid the import, manufacture, sale, distribution and advertisement of products used in the pastime known as vaping.

E-cigarettes typically contain the stimulant nicotine and there is little research on their long-term effects, including whether they help smokers quit. The rise in teenagers using e-cigarettes has alarmed health officials in the United States who worry users will become addicted and be more likely to try cigarettes.

The use of vaping devices has been widely criticized and more than two dozen countries have already banned them. Numerous local governments in the U.S. have also sought to limit their availability, concerned especially about the possibility that young people will become addicts and begin using tobacco.

Worldwide, the market for cigarettes is declining, although mainland China remains the largest producer and consumer of tobacco products, with more than half of the country's men regular smokers. In Hong Kong, bans on smoking in public places have significantly

reduced consumption and the mainland has followed in recent years by forcing smokers outdoors.



Pro-democracy lawmakers display placards "Press freedom persecution" to protest while Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam delivering her policy speech at the Legislative Council in Hong Kong Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2018. Hong Kong government ...[more](#)

Lam's speech focused on improving quality of life in Hong Kong, where education, health care, youth employment and the high cost of housing are key concerns.

Among the new policies announced is a plan to build new housing units that could provide homes for more than 1 million people.

Lam did not touch on controversial political issues in the territory, where Beijing has increasingly tightened its grip since Hong Kong's handover from British to Chinese rule in 1997.

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Hong Kong to ban e-cigarettes, other new smoking products

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Hong Kong leader plans to ban ecigarettes

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10 October 2018

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Hong Kong's leader has proposed banning sales of ecigarettes in the latest move to control the products touted as a method to help smokers quit.

"I propose a total ban on electronic cigarettes for protecting the health of our citizens, particularly children and teenagers," chief executive Carrie Lam said in her policy address on Wednesday.

Ecigarettes are often marketed as a method to help smokers quit smoking by providing nicotine in non-combustible form, such as vapour, that does not contain harmful tar or carbon monoxide. But [evidence](#) of their efficacy has been brought into question by the World Health Organisation and there are fears the products appeal to children.

Major tobacco companies have invested in the alternatives to cigarettes as traditional cigarettes have fallen out of favour and ecigarette start-up Juul recently achieved a valuation of [\\$15bn](#).

British American Tobacco said earlier this year that it expects sales from so-called next-generation products, such as vapes, oral tobacco and tobacco-free nicotine, to generate [£5bn in sales](#) by 2022, up from £397m in 2017.

The Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health, which advocates for tobacco control policies claims ecigarettes could "renormalize smoking behaviour and serve as a gateway to youth smoking". It said 37 per cent of people who had tried ecigarettes in the city were aged between 15 and 29.

Sales of e-cigarettes have already been banned in countries including Argentina, Thailand and Singapore and the sale of ecigarettes is subject to minimum age requirements in nations such as France and Italy.

Earlier this month, Philip Morris filed a lawsuit against the South Korean government, demanding a disclosure of information on Seoul's recent test of harmful substances found in e-cigarettes.

PMI's IQOS product, which heats tobacco rather than burning it creating smoke, has gained popularity among young smokers in South Korea.

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10 October 2018.
Wednesday

Hong Kong bans e-cigarettes in latest blow for big tobacco

Bloomberg

October 10, 2018 14:18 pm +08

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HONG KONG (Oct 10): Hong Kong is banning alternative smoking devices — the latest setback to the tobacco industry's efforts to find growth markets as cigarette demand shrinks worldwide.

In a surprise reversal, Hong Kong will impose a ban on e-cigarettes, a next-generation category of smokeless tobacco products, Chief Executive Carrie Lam said in a policy address Wednesday.

Hong Kong joins at least 27 countries that have banned next-generation smokeless devices, heeding advice from the World Health Organization. The products have come under fire from health officials across the globe because of concerns about their appeal among youth. The backlash is bad news for tobacco companies, which are investing billions of dollars in developing products that could move the industry beyond cigarettes.

In its legislative proposal this June, the Hong Kong government had proposed only to regulate e-cigarettes the same way as conventional tobacco, including restricting their sale to minors, and prohibiting advertisements and sponsorship.

Tobacco makers were looking to Hong Kong as a potential market for alternative devices. A Philip Morris International Inc representative said it doesn't sell any of its new tobacco alternatives in Hong Kong, while Japan Tobacco Inc said it only sells paper cigarettes in the territory.

"A full ban of e-cigarettes will only make black market business more popular, not help to protect teenagers under 18 years old and consumers," the Coalition on Tobacco Affairs, an industry group, said in a statement Wednesday. It added that none of its members is selling e-cigarettes or heat-not-burn devices in Hong Kong.

Japan Tobacco investors were unfazed by the news. Shares gained as much as 1.9% in Tokyo Wednesday. Philip Morris shares have tumbled about 27% from a peak last October.

The move comes as Big Tobacco companies have been increasingly pressured by tighter

restrictions on smoking and the sale of cigarettes around the globe. In the US, the largest market for e-cigarettes, regulators have recently taken a more severe stance on the devices after raising the alarms on their use by children and teens. The US Food and Drug Administration said it's considering banning flavored versions of nicotine devices. Last month, it seized documents from Juul Labs Inc, which offers sleek e-cigarettes with flavors that appeal to underage users.

While some countries have taken a combative stance against e-cigarettes, others have looked to them as a way to curb smoking. Regulators in countries including the UK and New Zealand have backed the devices as potentially less risky compared to traditional cigarettes. Tobacco companies have also touted the lessened health risks of the devices.

Hong Kong has one of the lowest smoking prevalence rates in the world, and about 10% of the population smokes, according to Bloomberg Intelligence data.

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Lisa Du and Daniela Wei, Bloomberg

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The products have come under fire from health officials across the globe because of concerns about their appeal among youth. The backlash is bad news for tobacco companies, which are investing billions of dollars in developing products that could move the industry beyond cigarettes.

"Without doubt, the tobacco industry is strong at lobbying," Lam said at a briefing after her address, adding that she'd received 3 000 letters this year against an e-cig ban. "But we have to do what's right for young people's health."

A legislative proposal this June had outlined regulating e-cigarettes the same way as conventional tobacco in Hong Kong, including restricting their sale to minors, and prohibiting advertisements and sponsorship.

"It's unfortunate that the government decided to reverse its earlier balanced decision to allow and regulate these products in line with the international trend," Philip Morris International said in statement on Wednesday. "We firmly believe that concerns regarding youth access can be better addressed through appropriate regulation and education."

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Japan Tobacco investors were unfazed by the news. Shares closed with a 1.2% gain in Tokyo on Wednesday. The stock is down 19% this year, while Philip Morris shares have tumbled about 27% from a peak last October.

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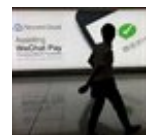
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Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam proposed on Wednesday banning electronic cigarettes throughout the territory, the [Financial Times reports](#). [Bloomberg, meanwhile, reports](#) that the ban is a fait accompli.

The e-cig technology, which emerged over the last few years but whose health advantages over cigarettes are unclear, is already banned in Argentina, Thailand, Singapore, and 24 other nations and is subject to age restrictions in many places. U.S. federal law permits the sale of e-cigarettes, but states and municipalities are creating their own restrictions. The Public Health Law Center keeps a map and database [here](#).

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is [studying how to discourage e-cigarette use](#) among younger people. The [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#) says that e-cigarettes may help existing cigarette users to reduce their exposure to some of the harmful products of burning tobacco, since e-cigarettes just heat the tobacco. However, it also states that “scientists still have a lot to learn about whether e-cigarettes are effective for quitting smoking” and that children, pregnant women, and non-smokers should not use e-cigarettes.

Lam cited the “health of our citizens, particularly children and teenagers” in announcing her plan to ban e-cigs in the Hong Kong. The city’s Council on Smoking and Health, which backs measures to control tobacco, says the devices could “renormalize smoking behavior and serve as a gateway to youth smoking.” The agency says that 37% of people who experiment with e-cigs are between ages 15 and 29. That said, Hong Kong already has one of the lowest smoking rates in the world; about 10% of its population smokes, Bloomberg reports.