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What are vape wastes?

Electronic cigarettes, vape pens or vaporizers (vape devices) are commonly used as alternatives to traditional cigarettes. They are battery-powered devices that use a heating element to vaporize fluids for inhalation. When these devices or their components are discarded, the materials are referred to as “vape wastes.”

PERSONAL/CONSUMER GUIDANCE

What are the hazards of vape wastes?

Vape wastes have two regulated hazardous components: the lithium-ion battery and nicotine-containing fluids. Lithium-ion batteries are hard on the environment and can cause fires in trashcans or landfills if improperly managed. Nicotine found in the vape fluids is extremely toxic; doses of 30 to 60 milligrams (mg) of nicotine may be fatal in adults.

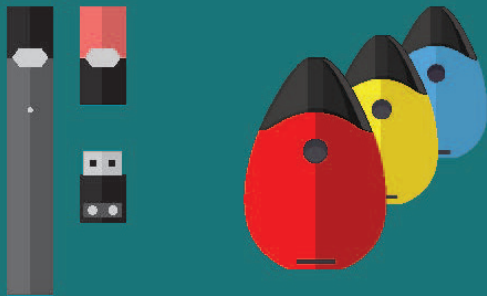
What can I do with the wastes?

The safest way to dispose of old vape fluids is by mixing the fluids with an absorbent material (e.g., kitty litter), sealing the material in a bag and throwing it in the garbage. This will help prevent accidental exposure to nicotine. If the fluids are contained in “pods” and cannot be emptied into the absorbent, place the pod(s) in a plastic bag filled with absorbent material. Do NOT break pods.

Batteries should be removed if possible and taken to a battery recycling center. If the battery can’t be removed, contact your local electronics recyclers to determine if they will accept the entire device. Be sure to empty any fluids remaining in the device before disposal.

Devices disposed of by consumers are considered household hazardous waste and have different, less stringent disposal requirements than commercial wastes. To learn more, contact your local waste collection company or the Hazardous Waste Program at 701-328-5166.





DAMAGED BATTERIES

When attempting to remove the battery, be very careful not to damage it.

Damaged batteries can cause chemical burns or fire hazards. Never try to forcefully remove a battery.



VAPE PODS

Some vape fluids come in vape "pods." These are single-use containers of vape fluids.

When disposing of the pods, do not break them to release the fluid into the absorbent. Instead, place the pod along with the absorbent material into a plastic bag and seal.



WASTE SEPARATION

Try to separate vape wastes early.

Have separate containers for batteries, devices and fluids.

RETAIL, SCHOOLS, COLLECTION CENTERS

What do commercial retailers do with unsold vape devices or products?

Commercial retailers must dispose of all vape wastes in accordance with the North Dakota Hazardous Waste Rules. If the wastes cannot be returned to the manufacturer or distributor, unsold devices and vape fluids are subject to all applicable hazardous waste rules.

Please contact the Hazardous Waste Program for more information.

What should schools do with confiscated devices?

Schools have reported confiscating large numbers of vape devices. Unlike commercial entities, the devices confiscated by the school are not subject to the hazardous waste regulations. However, the safest method of disposing of large quantities of vape wastes is to hire a hazardous waste management company.

Schools should follow the guidance on page one of this fact sheet for individual users. Remove batteries if possible, mix vape fluids with absorbents, or package pods with absorbent material and place in regular garbage.

What should local collection centers do with surrendered devices?

Like schools, the devices surrendered to collection centers are not subject to hazardous waste regulations. As always, the safest method of disposal of large amounts of vape wastes is to use a hazardous waste management company. If this is not possible, the collection centers should follow the guidance established on page one for individual users.

Remove batteries if possible, mix vape fluids with absorbents, or package pods with absorbent material and place in regular garbage.

Feel free to use this information, but please credit the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality.