

Ban proposed on electronic cigarettes on planes

September 14 2011, By JOAN LOWY , Associated Press

(AP) -- The Obama administration Wednesday proposed banning the use of electronic cigarettes on airline flights, saying there is concern the smokeless cigarettes may be harmful.

"[Airline passengers](#) have rights, and this new rule would enhance passenger comfort and reduce any confusion surrounding the use of electronic cigarettes in flight," [Transportation Secretary](#) Ray LaHood said in a statement.

The ban would clarify an existing [Transportation Department](#) rule prohibiting [smoking cigarettes](#) or similar products on airline flights.

The proposal would apply to all domestic airline flights, as well as scheduled flights of U.S. and foreign carriers to and from the U.S. The department is also considering whether to extend the ban to charter flights.

E-cigarettes, as they are popularly called, are designed to deliver nicotine or other substances to the smoker in the form of a vapor. They are powered by small lithium ion-batteries. Industry officials say there is no possible harm to the public from their use.

"Everybody knows that when you are smoking on an airplane that's an absolutely a no- no. But this is not smoking. This is vaping," Ray Story, CEO of the Tobacco Vapor Electronic Cigarette Association, said.

The Transportation Department is "asking for something that makes zero sense because this product emits nothing," Story said. "I don't think the masses have been educated enough to know this isn't smoking."

But the department said there is a lack of scientific data and knowledge of the ingredients in electronic cigarettes. The Air Force [Surgeon General](#) issued a memorandum highlighting the safety concerns regarding electronic cigarettes and placed them in the same category as [tobacco products](#), the department said.

Several states have taken steps to ban either the sale or use of electronic cigarettes. Amtrak has banned the use of electronic smoking devices on trains and in any area where smoking is prohibited. The U.S Navy has banned electronic cigarettes below decks in submarines.

The e-cigarette association, which represents 25 manufacturers and distributors, says on its website that there are five ingredients in the devices: nicotine, water, coriander, citric acid, and fragrant orchid element.

More information:

Transportation Department www.dot.gov

Tobacco Vapor Electronic Cigarette Association
<http://www.tveca.com/contacts.php>

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