

FDA seizes more than 1.4 million illegal vaping products

December 15 2023, by Dennis Thompson



Federal agents have seized more than 1.4 million illegal vaping products being smuggled into the United States from China.

A three-day operation at Los Angeles International Airport resulted in

the seizure of 41 shipments of illegal e-cigarettes worth more than \$18 million, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said.

The [products](#) included the hugely popular brand Elf Bar, as well as other flavored vapes that have been banned by the FDA.

The seized vaping products will be destroyed, the FDA said.

Many of the products were intentionally mis-declared as items like toys, shoes or [household items](#) in an attempt to evade customs, the FDA said.

"Those shamelessly attempting to smuggle illegal e-cigarettes, particularly those that appeal to youth, into this country should take heed of today's announcement," Brian King, director of the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products, said in an agency [news release](#). "Federal agencies are on to their antics and will not hesitate to take action."

"The significant value of these seized products is also a sobering reminder to these bad actors that their time and money would be better spent complying with the law," King added.

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids applauded the news, noting that Elf Bar was the most commonly used brand among young vapers in the 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey.

"This is the strongest enforcement action the government has taken to clear the market of illegal flavored e-cigarette products that are addicting our kids and endangering their health," Yolonda Richardson, president and CEO of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, said in a [statement](#).

About 2.1 million kids still use e-cigarettes in the United States, according to the federal survey, and nine out of 10 report using flavored

products.

Fruit flavors are the most popular, followed by candy, desserts, sweets, mint and menthol.

In May, the FDA had placed companies associated with Elf Bar brand vapes and other illegal e-cigarettes onto an import alert "red list," which allows the agency to detain products without conducting a full inspection at the time of entry.

The FDA conducted its subsequent operation with U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Prior to the action, agents scoured shipping invoices to identify shipments that could potentially contain illegal products.

The shipments included flavored Elf Bar vapes, as well as other products from Chinese manufacturer iMiracle Shenzhen with names like EB Design, EB Create and Lost Mary.

Other seized brands include Funky Republic, RELX Pod and IPLAY Max.

"The FDA is committed to continuing to stem the flow of illegal e-cigarettes into the United States," FDA Commissioner Dr. Robert Califf said in the FDA news release. "Unscrupulous companies try everything they can to bring unauthorized, youth-appealing tobacco products into the country. The FDA will remain vigilant, and together with our federal partners, stop these imports before they make it into the hands of our nation's youth."

In 2020, the FDA announced that it would crack down on flavored vape and [tobacco products](#).

As of December, the FDA has filed civil money penalty complaints

against 38 [e-cigarette](#) manufacturers and 67 retailers. The agency also has asked for seven permanent injunctions against firms marketing illegal e-cigarettes.

More information: Johns Hopkins Medicine has more about the [health effects of vaping](#).

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