

Hong Kong announces blanket ban of e-cigarettes

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Hong Kong announced plans on Thursday for a blanket ban on e-cigarettes, citing a "consensus" on the need for action and their impact on the health of young people.

The move came about two years after the Chinese city banned the import, manufacture and sale of [e-cigarettes](#) and heated [tobacco products](#).

"We will fully ban all alternative smoking products," Secretary for Health Lo Chung-mau said at a news conference, using the government term for products such as e-cigarettes.

Hong Kong already bans possession of e-cigarettes "for commercial purposes" and Thursday's proposal would extend the ban to retail buyers, even if they intended to smoke in private.

Under existing laws, anyone in Hong Kong who imports e-cigarettes can be punished by up to seven years in jail and a fine of HK\$2 million (\$256,000), while sellers and manufacturers can be jailed for up to six months.

"A blanket ban on alternative smoking products has become a consensus in society... It is time to ban all forms of possession of alternative smoking products, including for personal use," said Deputy Secretary for Health Eddie Lee.

City officials also announced other smoking curbs on Thursday, including a ban on smoking while queueing in outdoor public areas and sharing cigarettes with minors.

The government also proposed banning flavored tobacco, which officials said [survey results](#) showed particularly appealed to women and young people.

Lo said he hoped the e-cigarette ban and other proposals would be introduced to the legislature this year.

The World Health Organization reported last year that 34 countries have banned the sale of e-cigarettes, while 87 have full or partial regulation.

Hong Kong authorities hope to reduce the smoking prevalence rate to 7.8 percent by next year, down from 9.1 percent in 2023.

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