

Thailand bans import of water pipes, e-cigarettes

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(AP)—Thailand's Cabinet on Tuesday approved a ban on the import of hookah-style water pipes and electronic cigarettes, copying a similar move by neighboring Cambodia earlier this year.

Deputy government spokesman Maj. Gen. Sansern Kaewkamnerd said the [ban](#) proposed by the Commerce Ministry was imposed for health reasons. The Public Health Ministry originally suggested the move, saying the items were luring young people into smoking.

The ban also applies to substances that could be used to flavor the water used in the water pipes, also called baraku in Thailand. The use of baraku is still legal in areas where smoking is allowed. Those violating the ban face a maximum jail term of 10 years or a fine of five times the product's value, or both.

Cambodia in February banned the import, sale and promotion of e-cigarettes and shisha tobacco, a favorite of hookah-using smokers.

In the United States, at least 27 states have passed legislation prohibiting the sale of e-cigarettes to minors. Advocates of e-cigarettes say they can help smokers quit tobacco, but some critics contend the inhalers can get young people addicted to nicotine just like [cigarettes](#).

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