

Safe Disposal of Vape Waste

Guidance for K-12 schools in California



INTRODUCTION

When vaping occurs on campus, school staff often confiscate the vaping devices and paraphernalia and are responsible for safe storage and disposal of products.

Vaping devices and nicotine solutions are hazardous to human health and the environment, and must be handled, stored, and disposed of properly. Most vape waste should not be thrown in the garbage.

WHAT IS VAPE WASTE?



Nicotine Solution Waste

- Pods
- Cartridges
- Bottles



Battery Waste (Lithium-Ion)

- Vape Pens
- Mods/tanks



Nicotine and Battery Waste

- Single use or “disposable” devices

HANDLING CONFISCATED VAPE WASTE

Nicotine solutions are hazardous to human health and may cause illness if absorbed through the skin when touching a vaping device, pod, cartridge, or bottle. It is common for products to leak or have residual solution. Staff should wear nitrile gloves when handling vape waste and thoroughly wash their hands afterward. Gloves should not be re-used.



STORING CONFISCATED AND FOUND PRODUCTS

Vape waste should be properly stored in a clear plastic and airtight container. Label the container, “Hazardous Waste” and write the date the first waste is added to the container. Store in a cool space away from heat sources and direct sunlight and ensure it is not accessible to students.

- Damaged or leaking devices, pods, cartridges, or bottles should be isolated and stored in a sealable plastic bag before disposal.
- Damaged lithium-ion batteries (odorous, discolored, deformed, bulging, or swollen) can catch fire when exposed to moisture.





VAPE WASTE DISPOSAL

If your school or district currently works with a vendor to dispose of other hazardous waste, speak with them about proper storage and disposal options.

If not, it is important to properly dispose of the vape waste bin within 90 days and before it weighs over 2.2 lbs.

- If waste is under 2.2 lbs., the local hazardous waste agency may allow for disposal as household hazardous waste.
- If more than 2.2 lbs., the school will be reclassified as a Large Quantity Generator and new guidelines will be applied in the storage, transportation, and disposal of waste.

Review local hazardous waste guidelines and instructions for disposal of nicotine and battery waste. To find the nearest hazardous waste collection site, visit <https://calrecycle.ca.gov/HomeHazWaste/Directory/>.



FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

- **DO NOT** handle devices or liquids with bare hands
- **DO NOT** rinse or throw e-liquids in the sink or toilet
- **DO NOT** throw any component in the trash or recycling bin
- **DO NOT** try to disassemble devices
- **DO NOT** keep waste near heat sources, in direct sunlight, or accessible to students



CANNABIS WASTE

Cannabis is illegal at the federal level and, therefore, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not currently have regulatory authority to provide guidance on its disposal. As a result, cannabis/marijuana/THC vaping devices, pods and cartridges cannot be disposed of alongside nicotine waste, and must be thrown in the garbage. **However, a device found without a cartridge/pod attached can be stored and disposed of with other vape or battery waste.** For further guidance on disposal of cannabis products, contact the local Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). CUPA contact information can be found at <https://calcupa.org/about/cupa-locator.html>.



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