

Utah counties adopt rules for e-cigarettes

By The Associated Press

November 30th, 2014

Official: 'Never seen rates this high' for Utah teens using e-cigs

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — More and more Utah counties are enacting regulations to govern the sale and manufacture of increasingly popular e-cigarettes and keep them out of the hands of children.

Utah County became the latest when its health board voted Monday to adopt a set of regulations that basically mirrors what several other counties have in place, the Daily Herald of Provo reports.

The measures include four key requirements:

- That vendors obtain a retail permit.
- That manufacturers use ingredients in the liquid that are U.S. Pharmacopeia certified or Food and Drug Administration approved.
- That vendors take specific steps to ensure no sales are made to people under the age of 19, the legal age minimum in Utah for e-cigarettes.
- That e-liquid containers have child-proof caps.

"The purpose behind this is to protect our youth," said Linnea Fletcher of the Utah County Health Department, the Daily Herald reports "They have had easy access to these products. We want to know who is selling them and who is manufacturing them."

Poison control workers say that as the e-cigarette industry has boomed, the number of children exposed to the liquid nicotine that gives handheld vaporizing gadgets their kick also has spiked.

More than 2,700 people have called poison control this year to report an exposure to liquid nicotine, over half of those cases in children younger than 6, according to national statistics. The number shows a sharp rise from only a few hundred total cases just three years ago.

Electronic cigarettes are metal or plastic battery-powered devices resembling traditional cigarettes that heat a liquid nicotine solution, creating vapor that users inhale. Users get nicotine without the chemicals, tar or odor of regular cigarettes.

Weber County recently passed similar regulations and all but two of Utah's 29 counties are in the process of enacting rules that differ only slightly, said Aaron Frazier, executive director of the Utah Smoke-Free Association, an industry group representing 36 shops and six manufacturers in Utah.

The group is on board with the majority of the regulations because they ensure safety for consumers and consistency for vendors and manufacturers, Frazier said.

"It's very unfortunate, but there are people who think they can make their own liquid," Frazier told The Associated Press. "Rather than trying to understand true business practices, they start to manufacture out of their house. We don't want that. We want it in controlled situations."

In Davis County, the health board recently loosened a few rules, including scrapping a requirement that the liquid be in leak-proof and tamper evident containers, the Ogden Standard-Examiner reports (<http://bit.ly/11ByNIH>). They must still be child proof.

The county adopted a set of standards similar to Utah County's in January. Under the new revisions, the board also got rid of a requirement that nicotine content be labeled to show milligrams or milliliters or percent of nicotine by volume.

The changes were made in an effort to be fair to eight local retailers who buy their products from distributors in other counties without the rules.

"Although I hate to be in a position to loosen the regulations, it is the appropriate thing to do," said Lewis Garrett, Davis County Health director, the Standard-Examiner reported.

Frazier's group opposed the Davis County changes. He said they preferred the original regulations, which kept standards higher.

He hopes the Utah Legislature passes a set of rules in the next session, which starts Jan. 26. Last session, a bill containing many of the same requirements counties are adopting died when a Senate committee voted it down, saying the issue needs to be studied further.

"It makes it a lot easier when you have one set of regulations to follow," Frazier said.