
Ministry of Health Warns About the Dangers of Vapes and E Cigarettes

Release Date: 29 May, 2025

Residents of the Virgin Islands are being reminded of the dangers associated with all forms of tobacco use, as the Territory observes No Tobacco Day on May 31.

Public Health Officer in the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Ms. Renee Leonard emphasised that whether it is vapes, cigarettes, hookahs, or blend joints, it is all tobacco, and they are all harmful. She added that despite appealing flavours, these products are addictive, deceptive and linked to serious diseases.

Ms. Leonard said, "The community is not to be fooled by the marketing schemes of these products. We need to empower the community through education so we can unmask the lies to protect our future."

Ms. Leonard is urging smokers to quit and strongly advising non-smokers not to pick-up the habit, noting that smoking can significantly reduce life expectancy, quality of life and ultimately kill.

The Tobacco Products Control Act 2006 was updated this year and now makes provision for tobacco products and minors. The amendments include:

- Smoking in motor vehicles while a person who is under 18 years of age is present. Individual penalty \$500

- Smoking is prohibited within 50 feet of entrances, exits, and windows of public buildings. Additionally, all hotel rooms in the Territory smoking is prohibited.
- Warning on the package shall be printed in a rectangular format; cover at least 60% of the principal display panel; not be obscured by any outer packaging or by any other means; and not be placed on the outer removable packaging.
- Selling or offering to sell a tobacco product to a person who is under 18 years of age. Business penalty fine \$500.
- The Act amended: tobacco products” to include electronic cigarette.

World No Tobacco day will be observed on May 31 under the theme: *Unmasking the Appeal: Exposing Industry Tactics on Tobacco and Nicotine Products*.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development is committed to ensuring that all aspects of the environment with the potential to negatively impact the health of the population are managed efficiently to enable all persons in the BVI to attain and maintain optimal health and well-being.

###