



VAPING IN THE WORKPLACE

A BIGGER ISSUE THAN YOU THINK

New research shows startling prevalence and negative impact on productivity among vapers, non-vapers, and parents of kids who vape

ex program
by Truth Initiative®

A man with a beard is shown from the chest up, holding a vape pen to his mouth. He is wearing a grey polo shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. A dark red rectangular box is overlaid on the lower part of the image, containing white text.

“Microwaved fish was once the workplace aggravation—now it’s vaping,” touted a 2018 Wall Street Journal article.¹

And the issue appears to be getting worse with the increase in vaping among young people.

Tobacco use, including vaping, is a much bigger problem in the workplace than most employers think—and HR teams need to do more to help.

In 2019, 1,607 U.S. adults of all ages and from different company sizes and industries participated in our survey asking about workplace vaping attitudes and behaviors.

This survey shows 63% of all respondents report that vaping in the workplace bothers them. Additionally, 63% agree that vaping in the workplace decreases productivity for those who vape.

Other key findings:

- More than 80% of employees say vape- and smoke-free workplaces are important to them.
- Less than 50% of employees say their workplace has a formal, written policy to address vaping in the workplace.
- Only 31% of employees report that their workplace provides support to employees to quit or reduce vaping.
- Parents who know or suspect their child is vaping are very/extremely concerned, causing them to be less productive at work.

Are you doing enough to help your employees and their families live tobacco-free?



Did you know? Yes, e-cigarettes are tobacco products. Because e-cigarettes contain nicotine derived from tobacco, they are subject to government regulation as tobacco products.

Tobacco use and vaping in the U.S.

**Today, 49 million Americans use tobacco²—
about 1 out of every 5 U.S. adults.**



34.2 million
smoke cigarettes
(13.7%)



8.1 million
use e-cigarettes
(3.2%)



9.3 million
use 2 or more
tobacco products
(18.8%)

You may think 3.2% is a pretty low percentage of adults who vape. But this is among all adults. Among 18 to 24-year-olds in particular, e-cigarette use increased 46%, from 5.2% in 2017 to 7.6% in 2018, leading the U.S. Surgeon General³ to declare e-cigarette use among young people an epidemic.

Our research shows that vaping in the workplace is a much bigger concern than many employers recognize, and it has as much to do with those who do not vape as it does with those who do.

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

In November/December 2019, 1,607 employees from across the U.S. that were members of an opt-in online survey panel responded to an in-depth online survey about workplace vaping*.

GENDER

55%
FEMALE

45%
MALE

AGES



TOBACCO USE STATUS

- No tobacco use: 1,048 (65.2%)**
- E-cigarette-only users: 137 participants (8.5%)***
- Cigarette-only users: 155 participants (9.6%)****
- Dual users (cigarette + e-cigarette): 267 participants (16.6%)

EMPLOYER SIZE



* Data are not representative of the national population of working adults. ** No tobacco use is defined as no use of cigarettes or e-cigarettes.

*** Current e-cigarette use is defined as past 30-day use. **** Current cigarette use is defined as 100+ lifetime AND past 30-day use.

RESPONDENTS BY INDUSTRY



HEALTH SERVICES
(n=268)



EDUCATION
(n=184)



RETAIL
(n=174)



MANUFACTURING
(n=159)

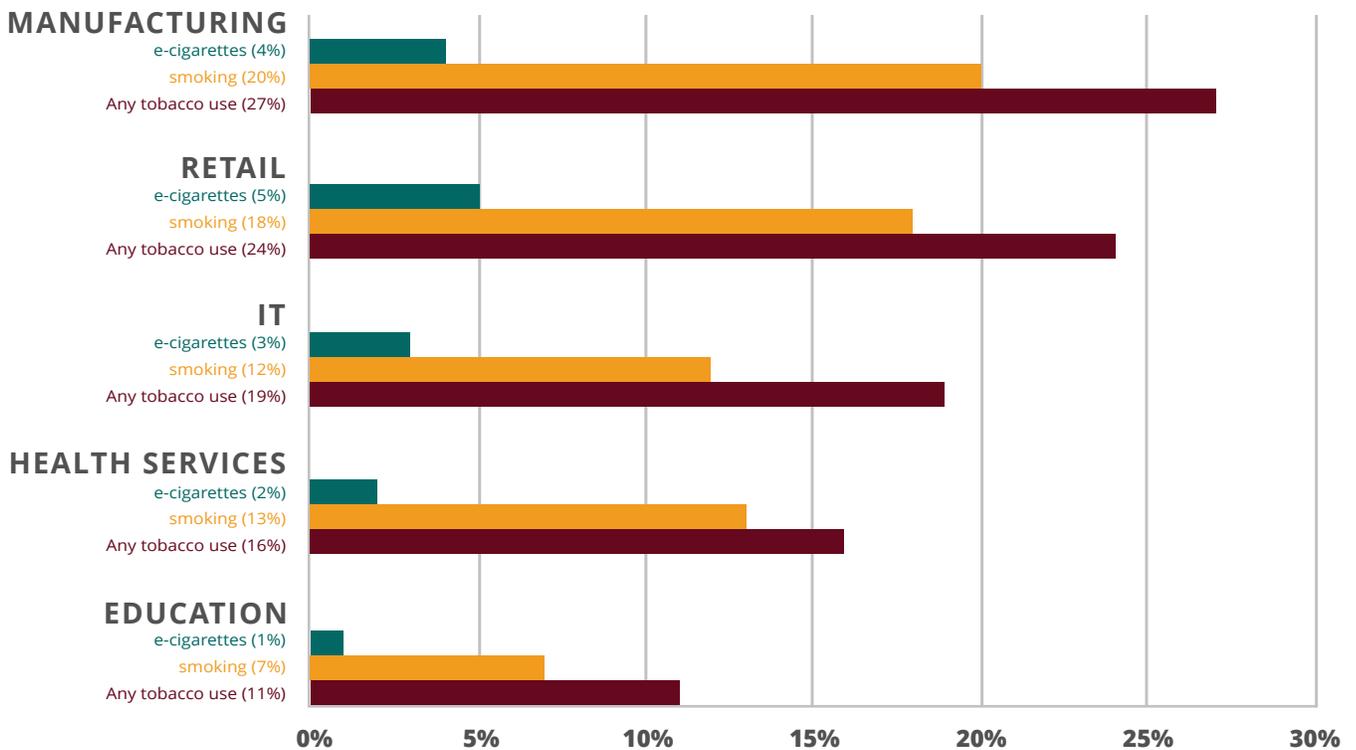


IT
(n=158)

This report also includes insights specific to the industries where we had the highest number of survey respondents (i.e., manufacturing, retail, IT, health services, education).

National data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention⁴ show tobacco use is more common in the manufacturing and retail industries than among the general U.S. population.

AMONG ALL U.S. ADULTS, 20% USE ANY TOBACCO, 14% SMOKE, AND 3% USE E-CIGARETTES



Health risks of vaping



Vaping isn't harmless, either for e-cigarette users themselves or for those exposed to secondhand aerosol (i.e., vapor).

Although e-cigarettes are likely less harmful than combustible cigarettes, the long-term effects of e-cigarette use are not yet known. Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. Plus, aerosol from e-cigarettes can contain cancer-causing chemicals and damage lung tissue, according to a report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM),⁵ which examined more than 800 peer-reviewed studies.

The NASEM report also found conclusive evidence that secondhand exposure to e-cigarettes poses risks. These health risks are particularly high for vulnerable populations like pregnant women and people with respiratory disorders like asthma.

Our survey shows that many workers understand that vaping presents health risks:

68%

overall agree that secondhand vapor is harmful.

70%

agree that vaping in the workplace is harmful to their health.

68%

agree that vaping in the workplace is harmful to the health of nearby non-vapers.

For more key facts to cut through confusion about e-cigarette use, download "5 Things Employers Need to Know Now about E-cigarettes."



Workplace vaping—who vapes and who sees/smells it

Though the percentage of those who vape in the workplace may be small, the impact it has on workers around them is significant. In our survey, 62% (1,001 people) report seeing a coworker vape in/around their workplace.

Of those who observe vaping:

58%

see coworkers
vaping inside

98%

see coworkers
vaping outside

76%

smell vapor

98%

see coworkers take
breaks to vape

58%

have had coworkers vape
while in their workspace



In addition to health concerns, decreased productivity related to vaping is also important to have on your radar.

Declining productivity among non-vapers and vapers

In our survey, 55% of non-vapers agree that vaping in the workplace decreases their productivity and 70% of non-vapers perceive that vaping in the workplace decreases productivity for those who do vape.

What this means is that even if you have a small number of people vaping at work, those handful of people who vape are affecting a much larger segment of your workforce—especially in certain industries and particularly non-vapers.

69% of non-vapers—versus 40% of vapers—say that vaping at work bothers them.

I am bothered by vaping at work:

		AGREE:
OVERALL		63%
DIFFERENCES BY INDUSTRY*		
INDUSTRY:	HEALTH SERVICES	64%
	EDUCATION	75%
	RETAIL	53%
	MANUFACTURING	61%
	IT	64%

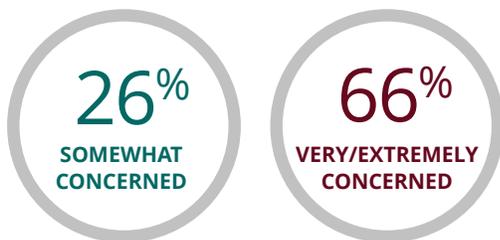
* This survey was not designed to test for statistical differences between specific industries. Sample sizes within individual industries may be small.

Parents are anxious, distracted, and less productive

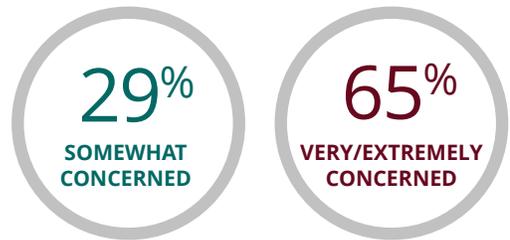
Vaping may also be distressing your employees in other ways. In our survey sample, 65% are parents. Of the parents who know or suspect their teen or young adult child is vaping, 2/3 are very or extremely concerned, and this concern translates into being less productive at work.

These parents' concerns are valid. More than a quarter of high school students—27.5%— used e-cigarettes in 2019, a 32% increase from 2018. And, to make matters worse, most parents are flying blind. According to Truth Initiative research conducted in 2019, almost 75% of parents indicated they received no communication from their child's school regarding e-cigarettes.

How concerned are you that your child (age 11-17) is vaping? (n=80)



How concerned are you that your child (age 18-25) is vaping? (n=79)



Because of my concerns about my child vaping, I am anxious/worry during the day. (n=154)



Because of my concerns about my child vaping, I have difficulty focusing on work. (n=154)



Because of my concerns about my child vaping, I am less productive at work. (n=154)





Lack of a comprehensive tobacco-free policy

Seventy-nine percent of respondents agree that vaping should be treated the same way as traditional cigarettes in the workplace. And while numerous progressive companies are already doing this, 51% say their company does not have a formal, written policy that addresses vaping in the workplace, or they are not aware of such as a policy. In short, there's ample opportunity.

There are a few reasons why adding vaping to your no-smoking workplace policy makes sense. First, you need to protect all employees from exposure to potentially harmful particulate emissions. Second, there are risks that e-cigarette devices can explode at work, causing burns and projectile injuries to employees.

From 2015 to 2018, there were an estimated 2,693 e-cigarette explosion and burn injuries reported in U.S. hospital emergency

departments.⁶ Banning e-cigarette devices at the workplace eliminates the risk posed by this potential occupational hazard.

Finally, including e-cigarettes in your no-smoking policy creates a supportive environment for quitting. Few vapers use e-cigarettes exclusively; nationally, nearly 60% of e-cigarettes users⁷ also smoke cigarettes. If any of them try to quit smoking combusted cigarettes, they may prolong or intensify their addiction by using e-cigarettes at work. By eliminating the possibility of continuing to use e-cigarettes at work, you increase the likelihood that smokers can quit, and stay quit.

Importance of a tobacco-free workplace

How important is a vape-free workplace?

	Overall	Non-vapers	Vapers
Somewhat/very/extremely important	84%	90%	65%

How important is a smoke-free workplace?

	Overall	Non-vapers	Vapers
Somewhat/very/extremely important	89%	93%	76%

Use of tobacco-free policies in the workplace

My workplace has a formal, written policy that specifically addresses vaping/using e-cigs in workplace.

No	30%
Yes	49%
I don't know	21%

My workplace has a formal, written policy that specifically addresses smoking in the workplace.

No	14%
Yes	76%
I don't know	10%

The use of e-cigs is restricted or prohibited at my workplace.

No	32%
Yes	53%
I don't know	15%



More support to quit tobacco needed in the workplace

97% of respondents say a workplace that supports health and wellness is important to them.

More than 8 in 10 respondents say it is important that their workplace supports tobacco cessation. Eighty-four percent of respondents say a workplace that supports quitting vaping is important, and 89% say a workplace that supports quitting smoking is important.

However, a surprising percentage of respondents say their employer does not offer

tailored support to quit vaping even though many e-cigarette users intend to quit and could benefit from evidence-based digital support to successfully do so. National data⁸ show 62% of e-cigarette users plan to quit vaping for good.

Does your workplace do anything to encourage employees to quit or reduce vaping?

	No	Yes	I don't know
TOTAL	43%	31%	26%
HEALTH SERVICES	35%	44%	21%
EDUCATION	34%	28%	38%
RETAIL	54%	22%	24%
MANUFACTURING	40%	35%	25%
IT	46%	35%	19%

When do you intend to quit vaping:

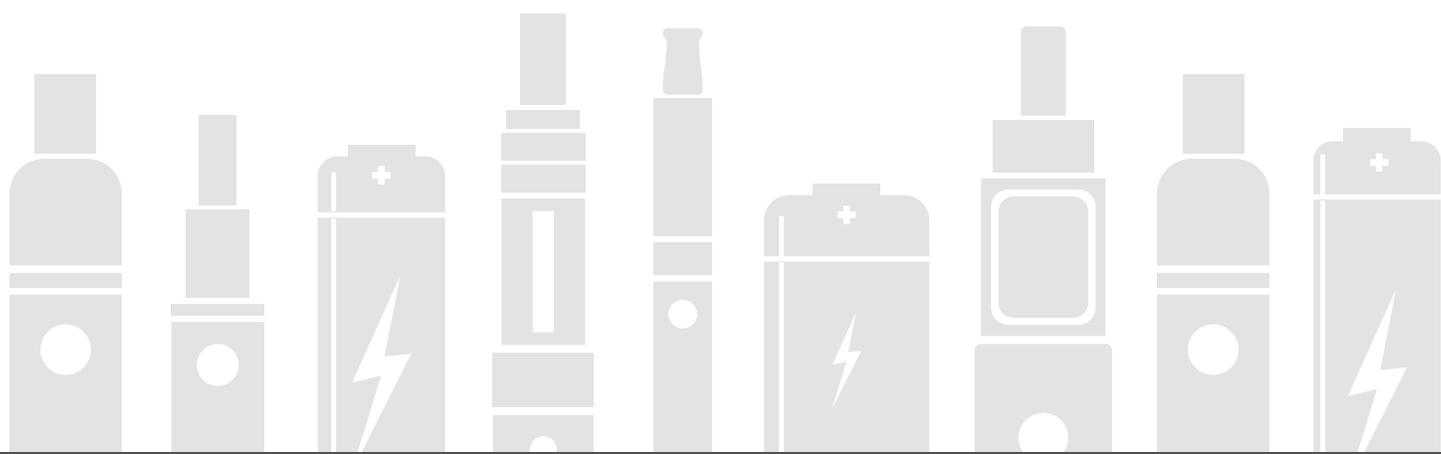
Within the next 30 days	43%
Within the next 6 months	39%
Within the next year	15%
Not in the next year	2%

* % reporting among those who intend to quit vaping (n=211)

Which types of quit vaping support would you be likely to use?

Quit medication	73%
Digital	71%
Phone-based coaching	49%
Group counseling	49%

* % reporting likely/extremely likely among those who intend to quit vaping (n=211)





To help people quit vaping, they need tailored support designed specifically for the product they use and their experiences.

The tailored support e-cigarette users—and all tobacco users—need

E-cigarette users have unique needs when it comes to triggers and the ability to secretly vape. For example, some e-cig users can get a few quick hits in a bathroom stall without anyone knowing, or even at their desk if they can do it on the sly. “Ghosting” involves absorbing e-cigarette vapor into the mouth so that it’s not detectable.

To help people quit vaping, they need tailored support that includes information specific to the product they use, the triggers they face, their distinct health risks, and understanding about their specific circumstances. It also takes

a robust tobacco-free policy at the workplace and comprehensive, ongoing communications to keep employees aware that this support exists.

Even if you have a few e-cig users—that you know about—in your organization, it’s possible your employees’ dependents may need nicotine addiction services. In addition, given what our survey showed, parents of young people who are vaping may need support to help their child quit.



The EX Program by Truth Initiative helps tobacco users quit

The EX Program offers personalized quitting support for all forms of tobacco, including support to e-cigarette users and to parents of children who vape.

The EX Program is the only quit-tobacco program that combines the power of Mayo Clinic's proven treatment model with scientific leadership in digital tobacco solutions from Truth Initiative.

With the EX Program, tobacco users gain easily accessible, multimodal tools to connect and receive support to quit and stay quit. This support includes:



A personalized quit plan



Convenient live chat with an expert EX Coach



Wisdom and support from the longest-running, active online community for quitting tobacco



Quit medication delivered to the participant's home



Dynamic text messages and emails that enhance the quitting process

Visit www.theexprogram.com to learn more or to see a demo today.



Sources:

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- 8 Rosen RL, Steinberg, ML. Interest in Quitting E-cigarettes Among Adults in the United States. *Nicotine Tob Res* 2019 Apr 23.