

Vape Disposal and Environmental Impact Beliefs among Youth and Young Adults

April 2026

Electronic vaping products (EVP) are the most commonly used tobacco product among youth and young adults in Vermont.^{1,2} Currently, 6% of middle and 16% of high school students, as well as 17% of young adults (ages 18-25) in Vermont, use these products.^{1,2} The term “vape” will be used in this data brief to refer to these products.

In addition to negative health effects for those who use them,³⁻⁵ vapes pose an environmental risk. Vapes are considered hazardous waste in Vermont and contain environmentally harmful materials, including heavy metals, plastic and batteries.⁶⁻⁸ As the popularity of single-use, disposable vapes continues to rise nationally and in Vermont, they generate increasing amounts of waste and potential pollution.^{9,10} Cigarettes are the world’s most littered item and there is concern vapes will follow in their footsteps.¹¹

Vapes should not just be thrown in the trash. To properly dispose vapes, contact your [local Solid Waste Management Entity](#) to learn when collection events or facilities are open to collect vape devices.

This data brief summarizes data on vape disposal and environmental impact beliefs from the Wave 10 survey of the [PACE Vermont Study](#). Between January and February 2025, 132 Vermont youth (ages 12-17) and 255 young adults (ages 18-25) participated in the survey.¹²

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact ahs.vdhpdpanalytics@vermont.gov.

Many youth and young adults are not safely disposing of vapes.

Among participants who used a JUUL (or other rechargeable device that uses pods) or a non-rechargeable, disposable nicotine vaping device in the past 30 days, about three-quarters threw them away in the regular trash, regular recycling or left them on the ground.

The top reported disposal methods for empty pods or empty disposable vapes and empty batteries or other vape pieces are the regular trash and recycling.



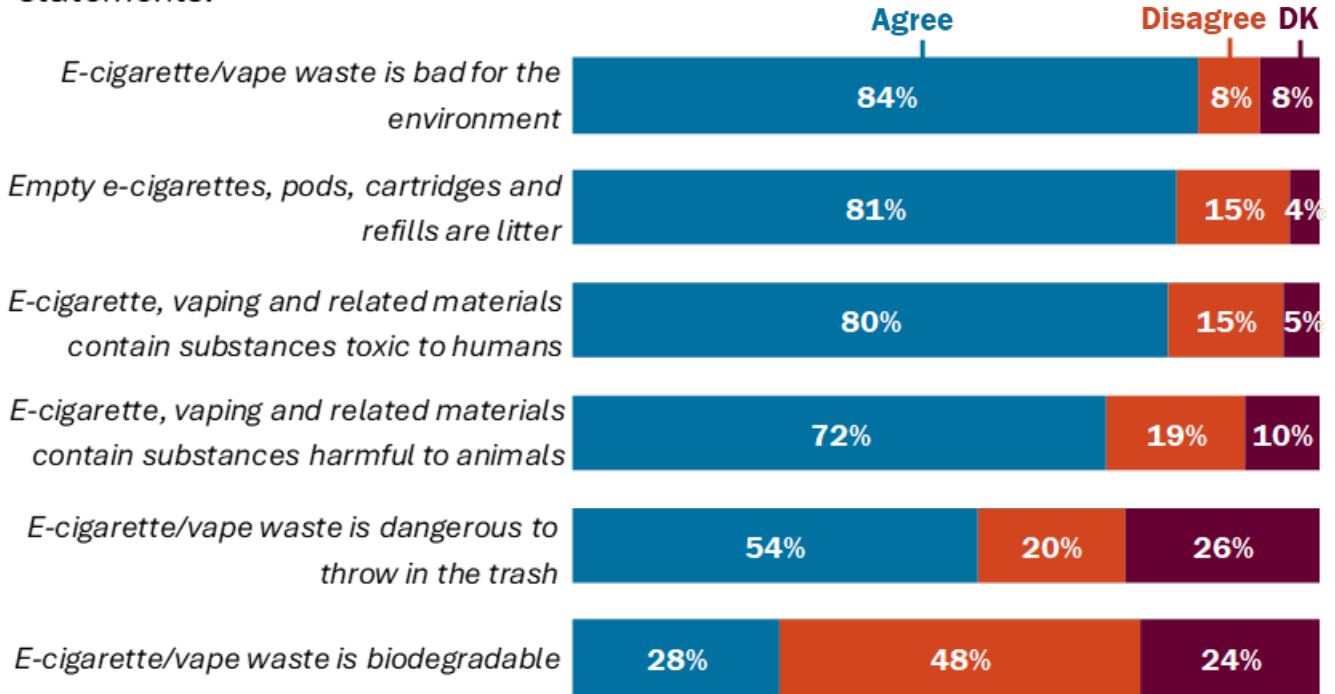
HealthVermont.gov
802-863-7200



Young Vermonters are aware of the negative impact of vape waste, but remain uncertain about proper disposal.

While most youth and young adults **agree** vape waste is harmful, nearly half **don't know (DK)** or **disagree** it is dangerous to put in the trash.

All survey participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:



Some beliefs differ among those who currently use vapes (defined as using at least once in the past 30 days) compared with those who do not.

- Participants who don't currently use vapes are more likely to agree e-cigarette/vape waste is bad for the environment than those who currently use vapes (88% vs. 75%).
- Participants who don't currently use vapes are less likely to agree e-cigarette/vape waste is biodegradable (17% vs. 55%) and dangerous to throw in the trash (50% vs. 66%) compared to those who currently use vapes.

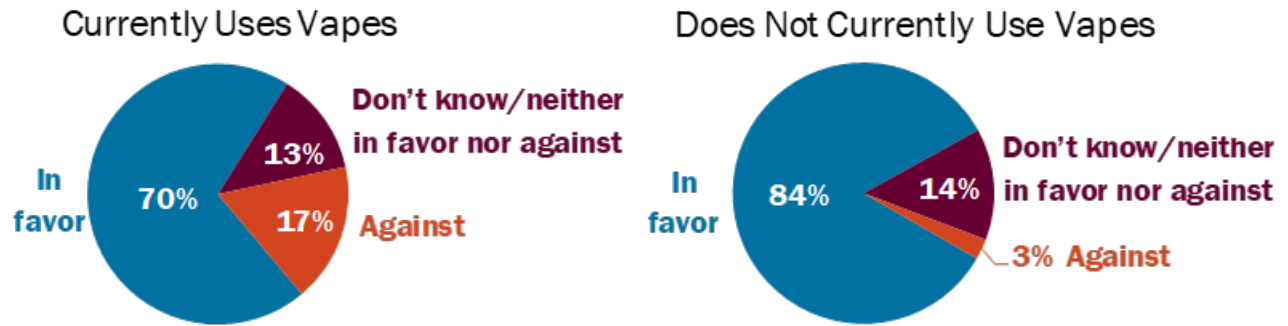
Most youth and young adults support vape waste prevention policy.

When asked:

How would you feel about a policy that would tax e-cigarettes/vapes to pay for cleanup of tobacco and electronic vapor products and reduce their impact on the environment?

80% of participants reported being somewhat or strongly in favor of the policy.

More than two in three (70%) participants who currently use vapes are in favor of a policy that would add a tax on vapes to pay for cleanup. The rate increases to 84% among those who don't currently vape.



Support for this policy remains high regardless of age group. However, fewer young adults who currently use vapes are supportive compared to those who do not.

- Most youth (82%) and young adults (78%) are in favor of the policy.
- A higher proportion of young adults who do not currently use vapes are in favor of the policy than young adults who currently use vapes (85% vs. 66%).

Resources

In 2023, Vermont passed [Act 58](#), the first in the nation household hazardous waste extended producer responsibility law. The act requires manufacturers of household products containing hazardous waste, including nicotine vape devices, to safely collect and dispose of them without charging the public. For more information on the implementation of the law, go to: [Household Hazardous Waste Extended Producer Responsibility Program](#)

Additional Information

- Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's [Hazardous Materials Program Fact Sheet on Vaping Devices](#)
- Public Health Law Center's [Disposing of E-Cigarette FAQ Sheet for Schools and Others](#)
- Vermont Department of Health's toolkit [Addressing Vaping in Vermont Schools](#)

Quit Tobacco and Nicotine

- **My Life, My Quit is Vermont's confidential and free cessation treatment resource for young people ages 12-17. Visit the [My Life, My Quit website](#) or text "Start My Quit" to 36072 to chat with a trained coach.**
- **Vermont residents ages 18 and older can visit the [802Quits website](#), text "START" to 36072 or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669).**
- **Visit the [Vermont Tobacco Control Program's website](#) to learn more.**

Data Notes

Current use of vapes is defined as using an electronic nicotine product (ENP) at least once in the past 30 days. ENPs were defined in the PACE Vermont survey as “electronic nicotine products, such as Puff Bar, Elf Bar, Vuse, and blu. Electronic nicotine products include e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods.”

PACE Vermont is a convenience sample of Vermont youth and young adults. The results are not generalizable to the population overall.

All PACE Vermont data included in this data brief were collected by Rutgers University. The Vermont Department of Health would like to acknowledge Rutgers University and Dr. Andrea Villanti for their leadership of the PACE Vermont Study. The PACE Vermont Study was funded by the Vermont Department of Health.

The Health Department recognizes that many social, economic and environmental inequities made worse by structural oppression, marginalization and racism influence the data we collect and report. We continuously work to better collect and share data that reflect the lived experiences of all Vermonters. If you have questions or concerns, please check our [Data Encyclopedia](#) for more information, including who to contact to find out more.

Sources

¹ 2023 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

² 2024 Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey

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⁶ Krause, M. J., & Townsend, T. G. (2015). Hazardous waste status of discarded electronic cigarettes. *Waste management (New York, N.Y.)*, 39, 57–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wasman.2015.02.005>

⁷ Ngambo, G., Hanna, E. G., Gannon, J., Marcus, H., Lomazzi, M., & Azari, R. (2023). A scoping review on e-cigarette environmental impacts. *Tobacco prevention & cessation*, 9, 30.

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¹⁰ (2025). *Monitoring E-Cigarette Sales: State Trends*. CDC Foundation. https://tobacomonitoring.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/State-E-Cigarette-Sales-Data-Brief_05.18.25_.pdf

¹¹ Truth Initiative. (2023, April 26). *Tobacco and the Environment*. Truth Initiative.

<https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/harmful-effects-tobacco/tobacco-and-environment>

¹² Policy and Communication Evaluation (PACE) Vermont Wave 10 (Winter 2025) Survey.

<https://www.pacevt.org>