

# THE JOURNAL RECORD

## Gavel to Gavel: E-cig regulations will develop

By: [David L. Kearney](#) February 26, 2014



We've all grown accustomed to the sight of lonely smokers, standing a discreet distance from building entrances as they satisfy their need for nicotine. These Oklahomans may soon be joined by their more modern brothers and sisters, the e-cigarette users.

E-cigarettes are electronic devices designed to deliver a dose of vaporized propylene glycol or vegetable glycerin, both common food additives. This vapor comes in hundreds of different flavors and can be infused with nicotine to provide a dose of nicotine similar to what is obtained by smoking a cigarette.

Although e-cigarettes have some laudable benefits according to their proponents, they have not been welcomed by cities and states throughout the country. New York City and Chicago, for example, have banned the use of e-cigarettes indoors in the same fashion that regular cigarettes are prohibited. This trend has reached Oklahoma City, where at least one city council member wants e-cigarettes banned. This step has already been taken by the city of Ada, which has banned the use of e-cigarettes on public property. The University of Central Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma have banned the use of e-cigarettes on campus. Gov. Mary Fallin has also issued an executive order that bans the use of the devices on state property as of Jan. 1, 2014.

Given the attention e-cigarettes have garnered, it should be no surprise that the Oklahoma Legislature is also looking at various measures to regulate the sale and use of e-cigarettes. Oklahoma businesses are also considering how to regulate e-cigarette usage on company property. Clearly, e-cigarettes will continue to garner regulatory and legislative attention until such time as their benefits and drawbacks are more fully understood by the public and the regulatory bodies that exert jurisdiction over these products.

Businesses interested in controlling e-cigarette usage in and around their facilities should consider creating a new policy or modifying their current tobacco use policy to specifically address e-cigarettes. The policy could, if desired, set the same standards for e-cigarette usage as

are currently in place for other tobacco products. Until regulators and legislatures determine how these products are classified and supervised, businesses would be wise to treat e-cigarettes as distinct and separate from traditional cigarettes.

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