

Red Flag Checklist: Spotting Illegal Vapes



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Vaping Awareness Month

While the legitimate vape sector is committed to delivering compliant products to enable adult smokers to quit, there are some rogue businesses who are dealing in illegal vapes.

To help you ensure the vapes you are using are up to regulation, we have developed an easy to remember guide of 'Red Flags' to look out for. If a vape fails any of these checks, it may well be non-compliant.

Where did you purchase the vape?

Counterfeit vapes are generally sold through smaller outlets such as barber shops, sweet stores and takeaways. If you've purchased your vape from an individual, there is also a chance it is not-compliant. *If you're unsure about the seller you purchased your vape from or suspect something is wrong, it is best to avoid using it and buy from a trusted store.*



Does it have an authenticity code?

Vape producers are increasingly including a label on the side of packaging which contains a unique verification code. This code can be used to check if the product is authentic.

In addition, there should be an ECID (European Community Identification) number which can be entered directly into the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency search facility.



If you are directed to a website after scanning a verification code, you should check the URL to ensure it is also authentic and you haven't been directed to a fake site.

What is the capacity?

Vape devices and individual e-liquid pods have a maximum capacity of 2ml in the UK, while bottles of nicotine-containing e-liquid used to refill a vape cannot exceed 10ml (non-nicotine options can come in larger sizes).

If a product exceeds these legal limits, it is likely non-compliant and should not be used.

Note: There are some multi-chamber devices that can hold multiple e-liquid pods, each with a capacity of 2ml.



Does it have the correct labels?

All vapes and e-liquids that contain nicotine must display a required health warning on the packaging. If this is not present, the product is not legal.



How to report illegal vape sales?

If you suspect a business of selling non-compliant or illegal vapes, or of selling to minors, we recommend you file a report through the UKVIA's Be Vape Vigilant portal.

More than 1,000 potential rogue sellers have been flagged through the campaign so far and all submissions are passed onto the relevant authorities to support intelligence-led enforcement.

Visit ukvia.co.uk/be-vape-vigilant



Remember

This is not an exhaustive list of red flags but should help you to identify and avoid illegal vapes. As a rule of thumb, you should not use a vape if you don't feel 100% confident in the seller or that the product meets regulations.

