



The Burning Question Are e-cigs allowed in public places?

Valencia Wicker - WCIV

E-cigs use electricity to vaporize flavored liquid nicotine. Although they are not FDA approved, several shops selling e-cigs have opened in Mount Pleasant, Summerville, Ladson and North Charleston.

Still, there are few regulations on whether or not they are allowed in public places.

"They are still going to be not really welcome in restaurants," said Cynthia Grosso, a corporate etiquette expert and owner of the Charleston School of Protocol and Etiquette. "They're still not going to be welcome in certain environments planes, boats, buses you know mass transit kinds of things."

For now, e-cigs are not allowed inside the Charleston International Airport, CARTA, the Medical University of South Carolina or Roper St. Francis facilities.

"When we look at e-cigarettes, they follow the same suggestions that we would have for people who are regular smokers," Grosso said.

That isn't the case for privately owned businesses, which have the jurisdiction to pick their own policies.

Management at Royal Lanes in Goose Creek went cigarette-free July 1, but decided to allow e-cigs.

"When the non-smoking rule came out they had already got their electronic cigarettes so, it was kind of an easy transition for us," said Errol Pinero, the general manager at Royal Lanes.

Pinero says about 10 percent of his clientele puff while bowling and he's had few complaints.



"It's not offensive, so I don't even think it registers to be honest with you," said Pinero. "I have had yet to have anyone come and complain to me and say the person next to me has one of those e-cigarettes and it's annoying. I haven't had any complaint from anyone."

In fact, the no cigarette policy is what encouraged some smoking bowlers to try vaping.

"It's like, I want to bowl so I had to come up with something," said Barbara Hansford.

"It's the same as smoking a cigarette but then you have good affects like it tastes way better," said Caity Hansford, Barbara's daughter. "It may taste like cotton candy."

The mother-daughter duo started using e-cigs two months ago.

"I would tell everybody to go out and by them," said Barbara Hansford. "For one thing it's a lot healthier them and for others. And, then it's a lot cheaper than buying."

Barbara Hansford says a e-cig cartridge costs her less than 10 percent of what she usually pays for a carton of cigarettes.

"It cost me \$4. A carton of cigarettes cost me \$55," said Barbara Hansford.

Despite the health questions, users say the benefits to e-cigs far outweigh cigarettes.

"I've been in places and people would come up and say man, they didn't like second hand smoke, said it stinks," said Jerry Connolly, a 45-year smoker. "But, I've never had them say anything with this. People just go about their business."

