



T: 0131-244 4208
E: cmo@gov.scot

Smoking and Vaping In Queues

The Scottish Government would like to request that retailers take steps to discourage people from smoking or vaping whilst waiting in queues to enter premises.

This request follows a significant volume of correspondence received by ourselves from concerned members of the public around the practice by a minority of people. While we stress that there is no scientific evidence to suggest that the Covid-19 virus can be spread through smoke and vape drift, this has been raised as a public concern over and above the fact that many find the passive inhaling of tobacco or vape drift unpleasant.

The dangers of second hand tobacco smoke are well understood and there is a known health risk to people in queues who are standing close to any clusters of people who are smoking. There is no scientifically proven risk to health from inhaling second hand vape.

Current laws governing where smoking is banned are restricted to enclosed spaces where the dangers from inhaling second-hand smoke are greater. Whether or not individuals are permitted to smoke outside premises remains at the discretion of management. This applies equally to retail as it does to hospitality settings.

This Government has been working with Scottish Trading Standards, the Scottish Retailers Consortium, and Scottish Grocers Federation – organisations which collectively represent the interests of most retailers across Scotland - to seek support in introducing non-legally binding protective measures that resolve the concerns expressed around the practice of smoking and/ or vaping in the relative close proximity of queues. We believe this should be discouraged for the consideration and comfort of others.

**From the Interim Chief
Medical Officer For Scotland**

**Dr Gregor Smith
Scottish Government**

Enquiries to:

Tobacco Control Team
St Andrews House
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

Tel: 0131-244 2169
tobaccocontrolteam@gov.scot

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Addresses

For action

Scottish Retailers, Pharmacies,
Restaurants, Cinemas and Hospitality
Outlets

For information

Scottish Grocers Federation,
Scottish Retail Consortium, Scottish
Trading Standards, Community
Pharmacy Network, Food
Standards Scotland, Local Authority
Environmental Health

Further Enquiries

Stephen Young
Tobacco Control Team

Tel: 0131-244 2169
tobaccocontrolteam@gov.scot



We recognise this continues to be a very testing time for business in Scotland, but are also clear that it will take retailers, employees and customers each playing their own part in making responsible choices to allow us to make progress in reopening the sector safely.

In line with the phase two retail sector and consumer guidance, and Operational guide for retailers (COVID-19) checklist – available on the Scottish Government website, I therefore ask for your support to **consider placing signs or notices outside your premises to encourage individuals not to smoke or vape whilst waiting in queues, for the consideration and comfort of others.**

Your assistance would be greatly appreciated in this matter.

Yours sincerely



Dr Gregor Smith
Interim Chief Medical Officer for Scotland
Scottish Government