

National standards in the works for vaping and vaping products

The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) has established a National Technical Committee (TC) to develop South African National Standards to guide the use of vaping products.



Source: Supplied

Currently in South Africa and the African region, there are no guidelines or regulations for vaping products, the TC will review existing regional/international standards, guidelines, research, policies and other documents to develop voluntary national standards for South Africa.

The SABS TC 2112 will be responsible for the setting of guidelines and promoting standardisation in the field of vaping products, covering electronic vaping products and their components, requirements for prefilled cartridges and reservoirs, terminology, sampling, methods of test and analysis, product specifications, safety, quality management and requirements for packaging, storage and transportation.

"Vaping and vaping products are increasingly popular in South Africa both in terms of recreational use and in economic activity. It is estimated that about 350,000 people use vaping products and that sales in 2019 amounted to R1.25bn. As the industry grows, there is a need to establish national standards that guide the quality of the products and provide consumers with some assurance that the electronic devices and products used in vaping are safe to use," explains Jodi Scholtz, lead administrator at the SABS.

Non-tobacco products

The SABS TC 2112 will only focus on non-tobacco products, as tobacco is currently regulated in South Africa through the Tobacco Products Control Act 83 of 1993. Currently, the Department of Health has a draft bill on the control of Tobacco Products and Electronic Delivery Systems that is undergoing public enquiry. "The SABS TC 2112 will focus on vaping products and take into account the inclusions of the draft bill, with the knowledge that standards are voluntary in nature. Vaping is the use of an inhalation device that vaporise liquid solutions which may contain nicotine and other ingredients,"

SABS said.

It added that plans to host the first TC meeting are underway and will be confirmed as soon as commitment from regulators and other key stakeholders have been confirmed. It is important to note that the SABS TC 2112 will be developing national standards for voluntary application.

"Once consensus has been reached amongst the TC participants, the draft standard will go through a public enquiry stage, wherein members of the public may comment and/or submit input into the draft standard. All comments are then taken into account in the next stage of developing the draft standard into a national standard (SANS)," says Scholtz.



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Scholtz explains that on average, it takes about 300 days to develop a national standard from scratch, however the duration of the process is dependent on the availability and commitment of members of the TC, the availability of published research and documents, consensus within TC's, the robustness of the public enquiry stage and various other logistical requirements.

TC 2112: Vaping products is currently established and any organisation or individual that is interested in participating can express their interest via an email to info@sabs.co.za.

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