



Illegal Flavored Vape Cartridges Readily Accessible In NYC: Officials

By: Katie Corrado, April 22, 2023

NEW YORK (PIX11) — Elf Bar is a popular brand of disposable flavored vaping devices that is catching heat from lawmakers and drug counselors.

The devices are banned in the United Kingdom, and flavored vapes are illegal in New York and New Jersey. They are, however, incredibly easy to find in local convenience stores and smoke shops.

Elf Bar in particular uses colorful packaging with kid-friendly flavor names, like “Gummy Bear” and “Cherry Peach Lemonade.” A former vape store worker from Florida said they are a draw for young customers.

“It is the flavors, obviously,” said Mario Manfredi, who also cited the device’s convenient size and high nicotine content as other appealing factors.

On TikTok, #elfbrand has 1.9 billion views. Kids and teens are familiar with the packaging.

“Everyone recognizes vape products, really from fourth grade up,” said Adam Birkenstock, the program director at the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. “Unfortunately, this is very recognizable for our kids, and Elf Bars are one of the examples that we use.”

Birkenstock said teens will often buy Elf Bars in bulk from China and resell them to friends. They may be knock-offs containing unknown chemicals, but they’re cheap and accessible.

“With young people, it’s really easy to get stuff like this through a website,” said Birkenstock.

The New Jersey Gasoline, C-Store, Automotive Association wants to see a crackdown on enforcing the ban on flavored vapes. In a statement, the Association said:

“The lack of enforcement on the flavored vape ban has been a big problem for convenience store owners too. Honest business owners suffer when their competitors start selling these products, and suddenly customers are leaving to go to the stores that are breaking the law. The worst of all worlds is when the government passes a ban and then doesn’t enforce it—the products are still available but honest business owners are hurt.”

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer is also asking the FDA to do everything up to banning Elf Bar, saying the flavors and advertising are oriented toward kids.

In a statement to PIX11 News, Elf Bar wrote:

“ELFBAR strictly adheres to domestic and international laws and regulations that forbid minors from buying and using our products. Our official websites are age-gated to make sure minors can’t access and purchase ELFBAR products online. We have issued an advertisement guideline prohibiting employees from advertising and marketing activities targeting minors.

“We firmly prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes to minors in our channel and sales guidelines and have established corresponding penalties for breaching the agreement.

“In January this year, ELFBAR launched the “Lighthouse Guardian Program” to protect teenagers’ safety and prevent their usage of nicotine in any form. We also provide training to our business partners so they may execute the Lighthouse Guardian Program.

“We are committed to applying every effort to limiting minors’ access to any vaping products, from product development and marketing to sales.”