

39 ETOMIDATE E-VAPORISER ABUSERS STARTED OR EXPECTED TO START REHABILITATION

After enhanced penalties for vaping offences came into force on 1 September, 39 abusers of etomidate e-vaporisers caught in the first three weeks have started or are expected to start their rehabilitation at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) or Social Service Agencies (SSAs).

2. From 1 to 21 September 2025, 656 persons have been caught for e-vaporiser related offences, of which, 44 persons were confirmed to be in possession of e-vaporisers laced with etomidate.

Importance of Rehabilitation for etomidate e-vaporiser abusers

3. In the past three weeks, a total of 65 suspected etomidate abusers were caught. Laboratory testing confirmed that 44 had e-vaporisers that contained etomidate while 12 did not contain etomidate. The test results of the e-vaporisers for the remaining 9 persons are pending.

4. Etomidate e-vaporiser abusers are required to attend rehabilitation in lieu of prosecution. As part of the process, their statements will be taken and they will be issued with notices to attend rehabilitation for up to six months, to help them quit. Abusers who fail to report for interviews and rehabilitation will be liable for prosecution.

5. The rehabilitation programme focuses on education, counselling, and support to help individuals overcome their addiction. Besides individual sessions, the programme will also include group and family sessions for the individuals to share their experiences and learn techniques to better cope while recovering from the addiction.

6. From 1 to 21 September, three etomidate abusers have started rehabilitation with IMH or the SSAs under the Ministry of Social and Family Development's Youth Enhanced Supervision Scheme programme. Another 36 are expected to start their rehabilitation this week. The remaining five are pending investigation.

Cases detected through hotline and online reporting

7. The public plays a crucial role in our fight against e-vaporiser activities. Over the past 3 weeks from 1 September to 21 September, there were 1,050 cases of e-vaporiser activities reported through HSA's online reporting form and hotlines. Of these, 34 were related to suspected use of etomidate e-vaporisers. HSA was able to conduct targeted enforcement actions based on these public reports, with 6 persons found in possession of suspected etomidate e-vaporisers.

8. Public reports are particularly useful when they contained actionable information such as where, when and how often the illegal use of e-vaporisers took

place. This would allow HSA to prioritise and take appropriate enforcement actions.

9. The public reports also included online listings, social media posts, and messaging platforms with illegal advertisements and posts. Such reports complement HSA's efforts. For the past 3 weeks, HSA has removed more than 170 online e-vaporiser-related listings.

10. HSA would like to thank the public for their vigilance and encourage the public to continue their valuable contribution to law enforcement by providing comprehensive details when reporting suspected offences.

Cases of importing, supplying or distributing e-vaporisers

11. Over the past 3 weeks, there was 1 case of suspected trafficking of etomidate e-vaporisers and 27 cases of smuggling of regular e-vaporisers. The 27 cases of smuggling were detected at the airport, checkpoints or cruise centres. Overall, more than 25,000 e-vaporisers and related components were seized in the past three weeks.

12. On 15 September 2025, HSA tendered four additional charges against the 40-year-old man, Khor Boon Chun, Derek, previously charged for allegedly trafficking e-vaporiser pods containing etomidate. These charges relate to his alleged consumption of etomidate, possession of an etomidate e-vaporiser pod and e-vaporisers. He is the first person to be charged under the Misuse of Drugs Act, on 8 September 2025, after etomidate was classified as a Class C controlled drug on 1 September 2025. He was arrested on 6 September after the Police was alerted to a man behaving suspiciously at Block 631 Ang Mo Kio Avenue 4. The accused is currently released on bail.

Support to quit

13. The Government continues to provide support to those who need help and support to quit vaping. In the past 3 weeks, 19 persons have been enrolled for voluntary rehabilitation through IMH and the four participating SSAs to quit the use of etomidate vaping through the QuitVape programme. 89 persons have signed up for the HPB I Quit programme. Members of the public who want to quit vaping can tap on the QuitVape programme (gov.sg/quitvape) or contact the Health Promotion Board (HPB)'s QuitLine at 1800 438 2000.

14. Those who voluntarily seek help will not face any penalties nor have an offence record for coming forward. However, if the individual is separately caught vaping, penalties under the various laws will be meted out and there will be an offence record. Support under the QuitVape programme is free for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents.

15. Members of the public can also voluntarily dispose of e-vaporisers safely at designated e-vaporiser disposal bins placed at selected locations including border checkpoints and where QuitVape programmes and rehabilitation are provided (e.g. HPB, IMH and participating SSAs).

Enhanced penalties

16. Under the enhanced framework that came into force on 1 September 2025, individuals found possessing, using, or purchasing e-vaporisers now face higher penalties and recalcitrant users will be required to undergo rehabilitation. Those who do not complete the rehabilitation programme will be prosecuted. Offenders caught using e-vaporisers for the third time and more will be prosecuted in court under the Tobacco (Control of Advertisements and Sale) Act 1993 and be liable for a fine of up to \$2,000.

17. Etomidate e-vaporiser offenders now face higher penalties and are required to attend rehabilitation for up to 6 months. Second-time offenders will be arrested and subjected to investigation and urine-testing, as well as mandatory supervision for 6 months which includes drug testing, and rehabilitation. Third-time offenders who are 16 years and older will undergo a 12-months regime, including detainment at the Drug Rehabilitation Centre (DRC), followed by drug testing and supervision.

18. Importers, sellers and distributors of etomidate e-vaporisers will also face much stiffer penalties. This includes 3 to 20 years' imprisonment and 5 to 15 strokes of the cane for importers, and 2 to 10 years' imprisonment and 2 to 5 strokes of the cane for sellers and distributors.

19. Members of the public who have information on the illegal advertisement, import, distribution, sale or possession of e-vaporisers can contact HSA to support our enforcement efforts through two convenient channels:

- Submit information through our online reporting form: www.go.gov.sg/reportvape or scan the QR code:



<https://go.gov.sg/reportvape>

- Call the Tobacco Regulation Branch at Tel: 6684 2036 or 6684 2037, operational daily, including weekends and public holidays, from 9am to 9pm.

20. Vaping is illegal in Singapore. The Government remains committed to strengthening enforcement efforts while providing support for those seeking to quit vaping. For more information, visit gov.sg/stopvaping.

