

# Smoking and Aircrew

## NOTE

*This paper supersedes 19POS20, of the same name.*

## BACKGROUND

Cigarette smoking is the single most important preventable environmental factor contributing to premature death in the world. The high morbidity and mortality rates are due to the effects of cigarette smoke on several diseases, but primarily on lung cancer, ischaemic heart disease, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease.

## PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SMOKING

Tobacco smoke contains a rich assortment of toxic components. Carbon monoxide and nicotine have received considerable scientific attention, particularly as to their acute and chronic physiological effects. A great deal of literature is available describing the effects (and the effects of withdrawal) of these substances on cardiovascular, psychological, and psychomotor functions in active and passive smokers.

Aviation environmental factors such as altitude, hypoxia, fatigue, and performance (impairment of memory, reaction time, vision, and vigilance) have been studied as they relate to carbon monoxide exposure. Particulates found in cigarette smoke also add to the irritative effect of low humidity and ozone on eye and nasal mucous membranes. These occur despite the rapid ventilation rates of the modern cockpit.

## ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES AND VAPING

In recent years, a wide array of products that simulate the act of smoking have been introduced. While some of these products have lower emissions than conventional cigarettes, recent studies have shown that e-cigarettes have similar health consequences as traditional tobacco smoking products, including weakening immunity, infections, dental issues, and increased risk of cardiovascular disease<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9833272/#:~:text=Studies%20have%20indicated%20that%20e,i ncreased%20risk%20of%20cardiovascular%20diseases>

<sup>2</sup>WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2021. <https://www.who.int/teams/health-promotion/tobacco-control/global-tobacco-report-2021>.

There is insufficient evidence to support these products as smoking-cessation tools. It is also important to note that electronic cigarettes and/or their liquids may be illegal in some countries.

Considering the above, IFALPA recommends a completely smoke-free environment on all aircraft including the flight deck area. In addition, it is highly recommended that pilots do not use cigarettes or e-cigarettes at all.