El Salvador



How many people die from smoking in El Salvador each year?

1,619

What is the annual cost-of-illness attributable to smoking in El Salvador each year?

128,123,131

US dollars

Current Rates of Smoking and Tobacco Use in El Salvador

Tobacco use continues to be an epidemic in El Salvador. Government complacency in the face of the tobacco epidemic protects the tobacco industry in El Salvador as the death toll grows each year. Proponents of healthier societies must push for the implementation of evidence-based best practices in tobacco control to create change and reduce the negative effects of tobacco use.

Adult Smoking Prevalence in El Salvador

15+ years old; 2025

Men	Women
9.00%	1.00%

Adult smoking prevalence in El Salvador is 5.00%.

Number of Adult Smokers in El Salvador

15+ years old; 2022

Men	Women
331,000	46,000

Number of adult smokers in El Salvador is 377,000.

Youth Smoking Prevalence in El Salvador

10-14 years old; 2023

Boys	Girls
6.54%	4.64%

Youth smoking prevalence in El Salvador is 5.62%.

Adult Smokeless Tobacco Use in El Salvador

15+ years old; smokeless tobacco includes snus, chewing tobacco, gutkha, etc.; 2022

Both Men and Women
2.00%

Adult smokeless tobacco use prevalence in El Salvador is 2.00%.

Deaths Caused by Tobacco in El Salvador

% deaths attributable to tobacco use in 2023

Men

4.22%

Women

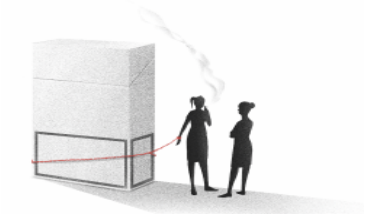
2.58%

3.44% of all deaths in El Salvador are caused by tobacco use.

Learn more about global Prevalence, Youth Smoking and Deaths.

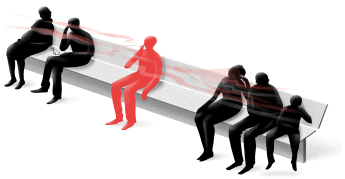
Negative Effect of Tobacco Use in El Salvador

Tobacco use harms both the public and fiscal health of El Salvador, threatening efforts to improve equity, alleviate poverty, and protect the environment.



Societal Harms

The annual cost-of-illness attributable to smoking in El Salvador is 128,123,131 US dollars. This includes direct costs related to healthcare expenditures and indirect costs related to lost productivity caused by illness and premature death.



Harms Development

Tobacco spending diverts funds from the resources that families need to rise out of poverty. On average in El Salvador, a smoker must spend 6.24% of GDP per capita to buy 100 packs of the most popular cigarettes in a year.



Environmental Harms

Cigarette butts are the most commonly discarded pieces of waste worldwide. It is estimated that 127 tons of butts wind up as toxic trash in El Salvador each year, equal to 47 female African elephants.



Harms Health Equity

The tobacco industry markets its products aggressively to lower-income populations and youth in El Salvador.



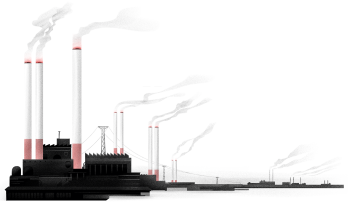
Harms NCDs

Not only is smoking a major risk factor for the 4 largest noncommunicable diseases (cancer, heart diseases, respiratory diseases, and diabetes), but people living with mental illness are nearly 2x as likely to smoke as other individuals.

Learn more about Health Effects.

Impact of the Tobacco Supply Chain on El Salvador

The tobacco industry profits significantly from producing and selling tobacco. At the same time, across the tobacco supply chain, there are significant negative health and economic repercussions for El Salvador.



Tobacco Production

There were more than 5,000,000,000,000 cigarettes produced in the world in 2019, or nearly 2 cigarettes per person per day.



Tobacco Industry

The total revenue of the 6 largest tobacco companies in the world was USD 364 billion in 2023, about the same as Pakistan's Gross National Income (GNI), 5x Panama's GNI and 9x Paraguay's GNI.



Tobacco Growing

There were 1,817 tons of tobacco produced in El Salvador in 2023 on 894 hectares of quality agricultural land that could have been used to grow food.

Learn more about global Growing and Product Sales.

Ending the Tobacco Epidemic in El Salvador

Fortunately, there are evidence-based i.e. proven-solutions to the challenges posed by tobacco use. For several decades, governments around the world have been introducing a set of policies that address the demand for tobacco products, particularly among youth. These policies effectively reduce consumption and are cost-effective because they save governments enormous amounts of money in health care spending and increase economic productivity.

Current Tobacco Control Policies in El Salvador

Designated Smoke-Free Areas in El Salvador

Healthcare Facilities	Educational Facilities	Universities	Government Facilities	Indoor Offices	Restaurants	Pubs and Bars	Public Transport	All Other Indoor Public Places	Funds for Enforcement
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA

Availability of Cessation Services in El Salvador

Quitting Resources

National quit line, and both NRT (Nicotine replacement therapy) and some cessation services cost-covered

National Quit Line

Yes

Learn more about best practices in Cessation.

Tobacco Packaging Regulations in El Salvador

Quality of Tobacco Packaging Regulation

None

Text warning label only

✓**Text warning label with graphic warning label**

Plain Packaging with text/graphic warning label

% of Pack Covered

50%

Learn more about best practices in Counter Marketing.

Tobacco Control Mass Media Campaigns in El Salvador

Ran a National Anti-Tobacco Campaign	**Yes**
Part Of A Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program	**Yes**
Pre-Tested With The Target Audience	**Yes**
Target Audience Research Was Conducted	**Yes**
Aired On Television And/Or Radio	**Yes**
Utilized Media Planning	**Yes**
Earned Media/Public Relations Were Used To Promote The Campaign	**Yes**
Process Evaluation Was Used To Assess Implementation	**Yes**
Outcome Evaluation Was Used To Assess Effectiveness	**Yes**

Learn more about best practices in Mass Media.

Tobacco Tax Policies in El Salvador

Using evidence-based international recommendations/best practices, the Economics for Health Cigarette Tax Scorecard assesses four components of tax systems - price, change in affordability, tax share, and structure - on a scale of 0 to 5, where a higher score is preferred.

Overall Score

1.88

The overall score is an average of the four component scores.

Cigarette Price

3.00

Consumers respond to higher prices by decreasing consumption and some quit using tobacco.

Change in Affordability Over Time

0.00

In addition to price, change in affordability is critical. Cigarettes need to become less affordable for consumption to decline.

Tax Share of Price

1.50

Large tax shares of price are usually a good indicator that taxes are working.

Tax Structure

3.00

Best practices include relying more on uniform specific excise taxes that are adjusted regularly to outpace growth and inflation.

Learn more about the Scorecard in El Salvador.

Regulations on Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS) in El Salvador

Marketing is the key avenue that tobacco companies use to reach consumers, new and old. Restricting or eliminating marketing is key to tobacco control success.

Direct Bans

6 out of 7 direct bans implemented

National TV and radio	Yes
International TV and radio	Yes
International magazines and newspapers	Yes
International magazines and newspapers	Yes
Billboard and outdoor advertising	Yes
Advertising at point of sale	No
Advertising on internet	Yes

Indirect Bans

5 out of 10 indirect bans implemented

Free distribution in mail or through other means	No
Promotional discounts	No
Non-tobacco products identified with tobacco brand names	Yes
Brand name of non-tobacco products used for tobacco product	Yes
Appearance in TV and/or films: tobacco brands (product placement)	Yes
Appearance in TV and/or films: tobacco products	Yes
Prescribed anti-tobacco ads required for any visual entertainment media product that depicts tobacco products, use or images	NA
Complete ban on sponsorship	No
Any form of contribution (financial or other support) to any event, activity or individual	Yes
Ban on the publicity of financial or other sponsorship or support by the tobacco industry of events, activities, individuals	NA

Ad Ban Compliance

100%

Citation: Drope J, Hamill S, editors. 2025. Country profile: El Salvador. . In The Tobacco Atlas. New York: Vital Strategies and Economics for Health.