

RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES OF DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MARIJUANA

DID YOU KNOW?

It is illegal and unsafe to drive under the influence of marijuana. Using even a small amount of marijuana product can alter brain function and negatively affect a person's ability to drive safely. Both the onset and duration of marijuana's effects depend on the method of consumption.

HOW CAN MARIJUANA IMPACT DRIVING?



Marijuana use can impact brain function and cognition, undermining a person's driving performance. Research shows marijuana users can experience impairments in spatial planning and decision making¹. Working memory, a key function in driving, can also decrease with marijuana use.² Marijuana use can affect a person's ability to drive safely by slowing reaction time, impairing coordination, and disrupting perception.^{3,4} Studies show an association between marijuana use and car crashes, though more research into this apparent link is needed.^{3,5,6}

HOW LONG SHOULD A PERSON WAIT BEFORE DRIVING?

The duration of marijuana's effects can depend on several factors, including product type, method of consumption, and THC dosage. Although detectable amounts of THC can last weeks after use, noticeable effects generally last 1-3 hours for smoked marijuana and several hours for edibles.⁷ A person may not feel the effects of a marijuana product

immediately upon consumption, but rather much later. Marijuana users should not assume it is okay to drive if they have yet to show obvious effects of use. Be safe and wait.

WHAT ARE THE LEGAL CONSEQUENCES OF DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MARIJUANA?

It is illegal to consume marijuana while operating a motor vehicle or while traveling as a passenger in a motor vehicle. Driving under the influence (DUI) of marijuana is a Class 1 Misdemeanor. A first-time DUI charge can result in up to one year in jail and/or a fine of up to \$2,500, with a mandatory fine of \$250. In addition, a first-time offense results in the loss of driving privileges for one year.

TIPS FOR PLANNING A SOBER RIDE:⁴

1

Select a designated driver who will remain sober.

2

Plan on calling a taxi or rideshare service.

3

Discourage friends and family from driving immediately after cannabis consumption.

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(3) Compton, R. P. (2017). *Marijuana-impaired driving-a report to congress* (No. DOT HS 812 440). United States. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

(4) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, October 19). *Driving*. Marijuana and Public Health. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/driving.html>.

(5) Lacey, J. H., Kelley-Baker, T., Berning, A., Romano, E., Ramirez, A., Yao, J., ... & Compton, R. (2016). *Drug and alcohol crash risk: A case-control study* (No. DOT HS 812 355). United States. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Office of Behavioral Safety Research.

(6) Preuss, U. W., Huestis, M. A., Schneider, M., Hermann, D., Lutz, B., Hasan, A., ... & Hoch, E. (2021). *Cannabis use and Car crashes: a review*. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 12, 643315.

(7) National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2020, July). *Cannabis (marijuana) research report*. Retrieved from <https://nida.nih.gov/download/1380/cannabis-marijuana-research-report.pdf?v=7fc7d24c3dc120a03cf26348876bc1e4>.

