

CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

Cannabis Awareness



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Introduction

On Oct. 17, cannabis became legal in Canada. The country was the only second in the world to legalize recreational use of the drug. Uruguay was the first in 2013 when lawmakers passed a bill to permit it, however pharmacies and government-authorized companies didn't begin selling it until 2017.

Many countries around the world have decriminalized cannabis, or laws are unenforced.

In Cambodia, for instance, although it's illegal, citizens are allowed to grow a small number of plants for medicinal or cooking purposes, and some restaurants sell "happy" pizza that uses cannabis as a topping.

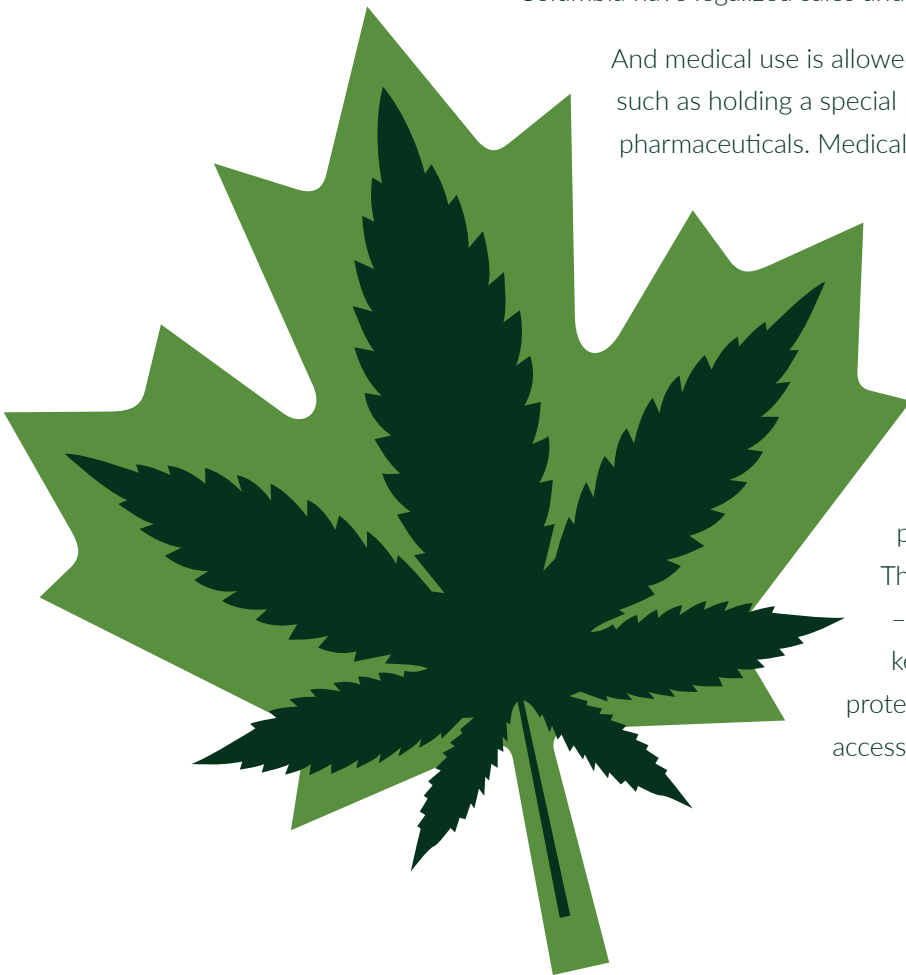
While it's technically illegal in the Netherlands, selling cannabis in coffee shops there is tolerated by police as long as the stores don't sell hard drugs, don't advertise their shop, don't sell to minors, and don't cause a nuisance in the neighbourhood; and citizens are allowed to possess and grow small amounts of cannabis.

In the United States, cannabis is illegal federally, but nine states and the District of Columbia have legalized sales and consumption.

And medical use is allowed in many nations, usually with restrictions such as holding a special permit or prescription, or only in the form of pharmaceuticals. Medical use was legalized in Canada in 2001.

Like consuming alcohol or prescription drugs, the use of cannabis can affect workers, and this makes cannabis use an issue around the globe and a subject that every business should think about.

Canada's Cannabis Act establishes controls on the production, distribution, sale and possession of cannabis across the country. The act is intended to accomplish three goals – keeping cannabis out of the hands of youth, keeping profits out of the hands of criminals, and protecting public health and safety by allowing adults access to safe, legal product.





Nicknames for cannabis include: weed, pot, grass, dope, reefer, ganga, and hash

When the act came into effect, adults who are 18 years of age or older are legally able to:

- possess up to 30 grams of legal cannabis, dried or equivalent in non-dried form in public
- share up to 30 grams of legal cannabis with other adults
- buy dried or fresh cannabis and cannabis oil from a provincially-licensed retailer
- in provinces and territories without a regulated retail framework, individuals are able to purchase cannabis online from federally-licensed producers
- grow, from licensed seed or seedlings, up to four cannabis plants per residence for personal use
- make cannabis products, such as food and drinks, at home as long as organic solvents are not used to create concentrated products

The age restrictions protect youth, creating two new criminal offences with maximum penalties of 14 years in jail for giving or selling cannabis to youth or using youth to commit a cannabis-related offence. The Cannabis Act also discourages youth from using it in similar ways to the current restrictions on advertising for tobacco products.

The Cannabis Act safeguards public health through strict safety and quality regulations, and the public will be educated about safety measures and potential health risks.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments will regulate the new system, with strict requirements for producers who grow and manufacture cannabis, and industry-wide rules for the types of products that can be sold, packaging and labelling regulations, and restrictions on where adults can consume cannabis.

In Canada each province and territory may have further restrictions, in keeping with the federal law. For example, in the province of Nova Scotia, the legal age to use, buy, grow, and possess cannabis is 19, the same as the legal age for alcohol.

Anyone operating or managing a business should be aware of how cannabis laws affect their workplace and should become informed about local legislation.

This guide – Cannabis Awareness – is intended to start the conversation for you, providing some education about cannabis and how it relates to the workplace.

History

3000 BCE

Cannabis originated in Asia thousands of years ago. Burned cannabis seeds have been found in burial mounds in Siberia that date back to 3000 BCE (Before Common Era), and cannabis has been found in the tombs of noble people buried in the Xinjiang region of China from around 2500 BCE.

2500 BCE

Its use by ancient Egyptians for treating sore eyes and for other medical purposes has been written on ancient papyri dating to 2000 BCE. It has also been mentioned in sacred Hindu texts from 2000-1400 BCE, where it was used as a religious offering, to treat ailments and as a 'source of happiness.'

2000 BCE

It was also referred to in 70 CE (Common Era) as a treatment for earaches by a Greek physician who was a doctor for the Roman army. Other early medical uses include treating rheumatism, gout, and malaria in China, and its first recorded use as an anesthetic was in 200 CE, also in China.

1400 BCE

The plant has two main subspecies – Cannabis sativa, which has psychoactive properties, and Cannabis sativa L., which doesn't, and is more commonly known as hemp.

Hemp was important to the Age of Sail (16th to mid-19th centuries), as it was used to make sails and rope, and when the plant made its way to North America in the 1600s, it was grown as a source of fiber for making rope, sails and clothing.

70

200

Cannabis was reintroduced to British medicine in 1842 by Dr. William O'Shaughnessy, an army surgeon who had served in India. At this time, it was used to treat a number of ailments, such as muscle spasms, menstrual cramps, rheumatism, epilepsy, and as a sedative. The medicine was taken orally, usually as a tincture (made by dissolving it in alcohol), not smoked.

In the late 1800s the medicinal properties of cannabis were often described in scientific journals, and it was added to the United States Pharmacopeia in 1850, but its medicinal use slowly disappeared at the beginning of the 20th century, because of an inability to control its quality. It was replaced by opium-based and synthetic drugs.

It wasn't until the early part of the 20th century that it became more widely used recreationally to produce a feeling of euphoria, introduced by Mexican immigrants who came to the United States after the Mexican Revolution.

1600

1850

1950

In the late 1950s, the World Health Organization claimed that cannabis no longer served any useful medical purpose, and in 1961 the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs defined cannabis as a dangerous narcotic with high potential for abuse. Cannabis was made illegal in many countries between the years 1923 and 1952.

Cannabis began to be used as a medicine again in the 1970s and 1980s, used by cancer and AIDS patients, who found relief from the effects of chemotherapy and wasting syndrome.



Slang terms for smoking cannabis include: toking, cheeching, smoking trees, going loco, and torching up.

The Difference Between Decriminalization and Legalization

Definitions from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

Legalization

To make legal, especially to give legal validity or sanction to

Decriminalization

To remove or reduce the criminal classification or status of

Definitions from the Oxford Dictionary:

Legalization

The action of making something that was previously illegal permissible by law.

Decriminalization

The action or process of ceasing to treat something as a criminal offence.

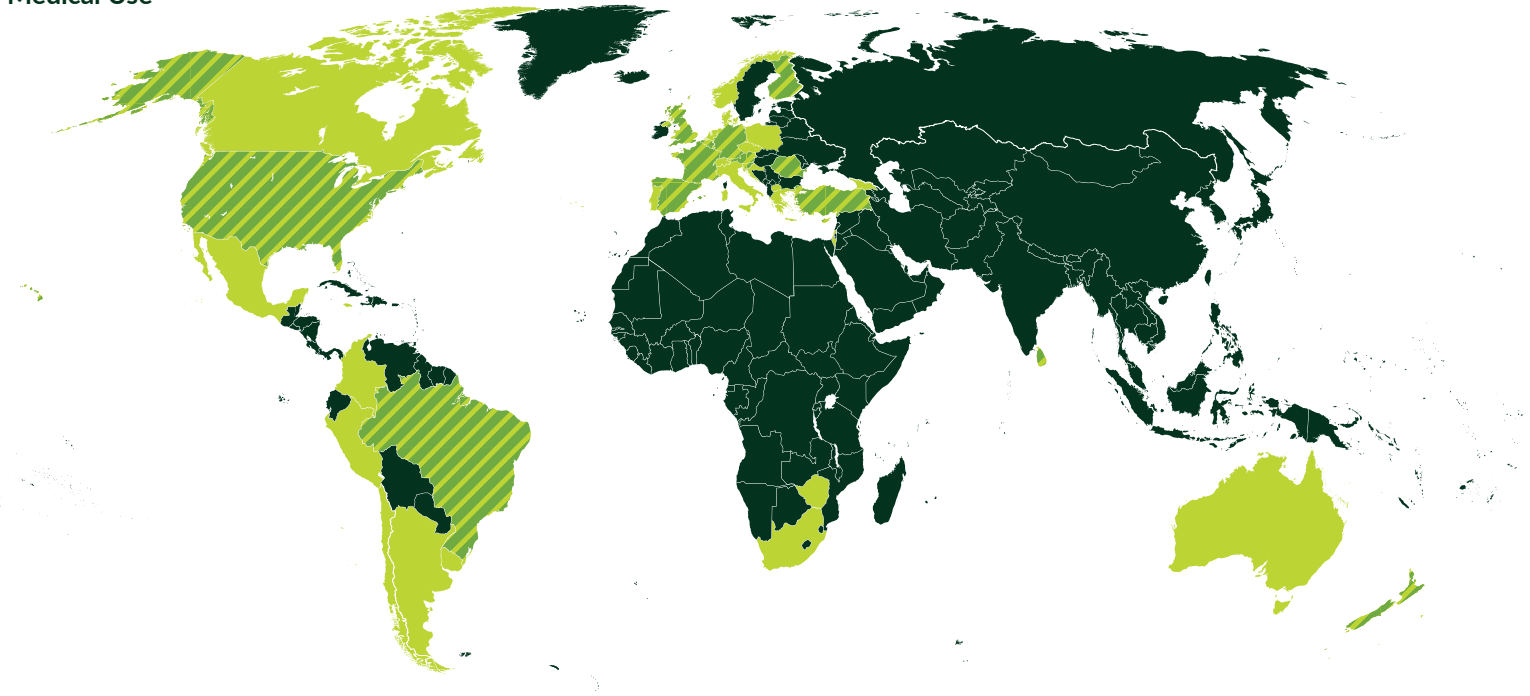
In the case of cannabis, **decriminalization** refers to laws that are amended to make particular acts criminal, but not subject to prosecution. The act is still illegal or unlawful, but isn't viewed as a criminal offense. Infractions are punished by minor penalties such as fines, not by criminal charges or jail time.

With **legalization**, possession and personal use of cannabis is permitted, but regulations are put in place to control cultivation and sales, and the use is subject to age restrictions and specific places.

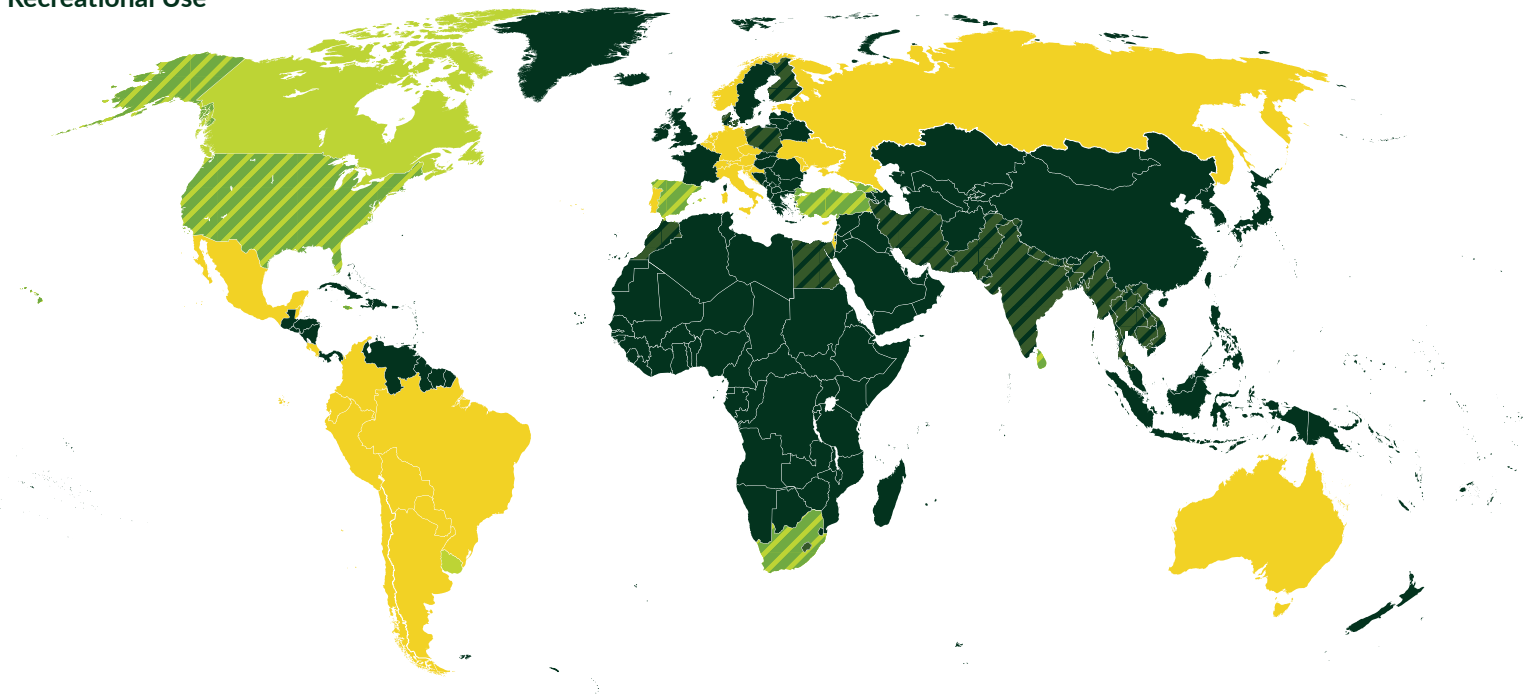
Committing a decriminalized act still results in a penalty or punishment, while carrying out legalized acts doesn't.

Cannabis Regulations Around the World

Medical Use



Recreational Use



Cannabis Plant

Cannabis is very popular; it has become the most commonly used illicit drug in the world. So, what exactly is it?

Cannabis is derived from the plant, Cannabis sativa L. The cannabis plant has been used in a variety of ways for centuries. Its stems, stalks, roots, and seeds are used in the production of many useful things, including:

Cannabis plants that are grown for making these products are commonly referred to as hemp plants.

At some point in history, it was discovered that the leaves and flowers of some cannabis plants have intoxicating properties when ingested. They contain a chemical called delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC for short) which has mind-altering properties. Cannabis plants with high levels of THC are used for cannabis. Hemp plants, on the other hand, have very low levels of THC.

There are three different intoxicating products made from cannabis plants that have high levels of TCH:

Seeds	
Cooking oils	Margarine
Oil paints	Varnishes
Printing inks	Solvents
Lubricants	Putty
Shampoo	Cosmetics

Stalks/stems/roots	
Twine	Fabrics
Rope	Nets
Canvas	Tarps
Paper	Newsprint
Cardboard	Fiberboard
Insulation	Cement



Cannabis is made from the dried leaves and flowering tops of the plant. It is green, brown, or gray in color.

Hashish is a dried form of the resin that is secreted by the flowering tops of the plant. It is also known as hash or cannabis resin. It comes in solid chunks that are dark brown or black in color.

Hash oil is made by concentrating hashish with alcohol or another organic solvent. It is a thick reddish-brown or greenish-black oil.

People use cannabis, hashish, and hash oil in several ways:

Smoked	In hand-rolled cigarettes (joints) In emptied-out cigars (blunts) In pipes or water pipes (bongs)
Eaten	Mixed into food (brownies, cake, cookies)
Drunk	Made into tea
Inhaled	Using vaporizers

Cannabis and the Body

Why do people misuse cannabis, hashish, and hash oil? They do it to get high. The THC in cannabis has a psychoactive effect, meaning it works on your brain. THC attaches to cannabinoid receptors that are found on the cells of certain parts of your brain. Cannabinoid receptors are found in different locations:

Cerebral cortex

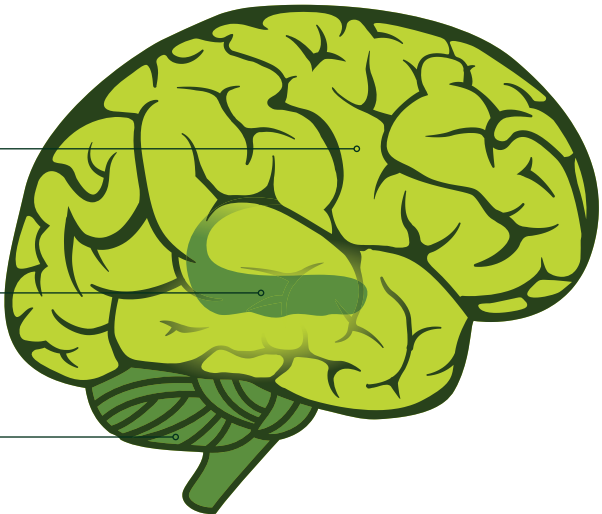
Responsible for higher thinking

Hippocampus

Responsible for learning and memory

Cerebellum

Responsible for body movement



When the THC attaches, it interferes with the normal communication between the brain cells. It also triggers the release of dopamine, a chemical that helps nerve cells communicate.

People who use cannabis report a feeling of relaxation and intense happiness. They may become very mellow and start to giggle or laugh. However, the drug also causes other short-term and long-term effects on the body:

Possible Short-term Effects:

- Altered senses (colors look brighter, sounds are more distinct)
- Altered sense of time
- Changes in mood
- Impaired body movement
- Difficulty thinking/performing complex tasks
- Difficulty problem-solving
- Impaired memory
- Reduced concentration
- Reduced reaction times
- Increased heart-rate
- Dry mouth
- Food cravings
- Drowsiness

Possible Long-term Effects:

- Altered brain development in youths and young adults
- Reduced ability to think
- Reduced memory
- Reduced learning functions
- Respiratory problems (if smoked)
- Problems with fetal development in pregnant women
- Triggering of symptoms in people who are predisposed to schizophrenia
- Worsening of symptoms in people already diagnosed with schizophrenia
- Development of substance-use disorder

The effects can be different from person to person, and the same person can have different experiences each time he or she uses cannabis. How intense the effects are and how long they last for depend on the person's size and how fast they metabolize the drug, the amount of drug used, how potent it is, and how often the person uses it.

Hashish is generally stronger than cannabis. Hash oil is more potent than either cannabis or hashish.

Mixing cannabis with alcohol can greatly increase a person's intoxication level. The risk is not merely twice as high as using one substance or the other; rather, the risk increases by three or four times.

Can you tell if a person is under the influence of cannabis? While there is no sure-fire way to tell, there are signs that can indicate impairment:

- Rapid heart rate
- Red eyes
- Dilated pupils
- Poor coordination and balance
- Smell of cannabis in clothing or hair



Cannabis users have been depicted in many movies, including Up in Smoke (Cheech and Chong); Pineapple Express; Dazed and Confused; Dude, Where's My Car? and The Big Lebowski.

Medical vs Recreational Uses

The main active ingredients in a cannabis plant, which are classed as cannabinoids, are THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) and CBD (cannabidiol).

THC is the psychoactive component responsible for a feeling of euphoria or "high" from ingesting or inhaling it.

CBD does not produce a high, and has more therapeutic benefits, including calming the nervous system and alleviating pain.

Medical cannabis typically contains a higher CBD content.

Recreational cannabis typically contains a higher THC content.

The two main types of cannabis plants are sativa and indica.



Cannabis is used medicinally for:

- Relief of pain
- Relief of nausea and vomiting
- Increase in appetite
- Reduction of muscle spasms

Cannabis is sometimes prescribed as a therapy for the following conditions:

- Arthritis
- Chronic pain
- Glaucoma
- Sleep disorders
- Seizure disorders
- Nerve pain
- Cancer
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Migraines
- Crohn's Disease
- HIV/AIDS
- Eating disorders

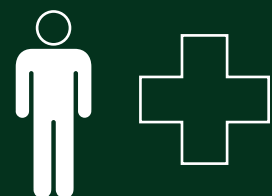
Sativa

- Tall plant with narrow leaves
- Higher in THC
- Makes a user feel euphoric
- Mainly affects the mind
- Psychoactive, produces a high
- Main use: recreational, spiritual
- Conditions treated: fatigue, migraines, depression



Indica

- Short plant with broad leaves
- Higher in CBD
- Makes a user feel heavy
- Mainly affects the body
- Used for pain relief and sedation
- Main use: medical
- Conditions treated: anxiety, panic attacks, pain, nausea, seizures



Workplace Impacts

Knowing how cannabis affects a person physically, cognitively, and psychologically, a host of problems can arise if an employee comes to work under the influence of it. This can affect productivity and safety.

How often have you heard the expression, ‘time is money’? It may be an overused cliché and yet in the business world it's true that having an efficient, effective, productive workforce can help a company make money. On the other hand, a workforce that is inefficient, unproductive, and wastes time can cost a company a lot.

Productivity

Cannabis can contribute to a decrease in productivity in many ways:

Absenteeism

- Altered sense of time
- Illness from overdose
- Respiratory problems related to smoking cannabis
- Triggering or worsening of mental illness symptoms

Employee turnover

- Being caught using cannabis at work in violation of law or company policy
- Criminal charges leading to dismissal
- Change in mood, behavioral issues

Making mistakes on the job

- Poor concentration
- Difficulty with problem solving
- Memory problems
- Drowsiness

Decrease in amount of work accomplished per shift

- Poor concentration
- Difficulty with problem solving
- Memory problems
- Drowsiness

Drop in employee morale

- Changes in mood, not getting along with co-workers
- Not showing up for work, adding burden on co-workers
- Not doing work properly, more burden on co-workers

Safety

Cannabis use has been linked to increases in workplace accidents and injuries. When it comes to safety, being impaired by cannabis while on the job poses a three-fold risk: it jeopardizes the safety of the impaired employee, the safety of other staff in the workplace, and, depending on the business or industry, the safety of the public.

People who are under the influence of cannabis are a safety hazard because of the impairment to their coordination, concentration, and judgment, and the potential for drowsiness. The risks of an accident are greater in work environments that already contain potential hazards, such as:

- Operating machinery
- Operating a vehicle
- Using power tools
- Working at high elevations
- Working in ditches or confined spaces
- Working with electricity
- Working with chemicals or other hazardous materials
- Working near water
- Working in proximity to heat sources

Being high on cannabis can also pose a danger to the public, for example if the employee is:

- Involved in personal care, such as in a health care, long-term care, or child care setting
- Operating a vehicle
- Involved in operations that include the safe handling of food
- Handling chemicals or other hazardous materials in a public place



The Chinese surgeon Hua Tuo (c. 140-208) is recorded as the first person to use cannabis as an anesthetic. He turned the plant into powder and mixed it with wine, which was given to patients before he performed surgeries. The Chinese term for anesthesia – mázui – literally means cannabis intoxication.

One of the biggest areas of concern involves operating a vehicle. Studies show that cannabis impairment increases the risk of being involved in a motor vehicle accident by 1.3 to four times. A 2016 report by the American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety states that cannabis impairment affects virtually every capacity related to operating a vehicle (<https://www.aaafoundation.org/sites/default/files/OverviewOfMajorIssuesRegardingAlcoholCannabisImpacts.pdf>). When people are high on cannabis, their concentration and attention levels are reduced and their depth-perception is compromised. Their hands may be unsteady and their reaction times are slower. How long it takes for these effects to wear off varies depending on the person, the amount of cannabis used, and the strength of the cannabis used. The effects can last for five hours or more.

It is strongly recommended that people avoid operating a vehicle, or other mobility device, for at least six hours to be sure the effects have worn off. The same goes for operating machinery.

If a person has combined cannabis with alcohol, the risks of an accident are even greater, and the time required to sober up is even longer.

Beyond the risk of an accident, driving while high can run you afoul of the law. In some jurisdictions, it is a criminal offense to operate a vehicle while under the influence of cannabis or other drugs. Some jurisdictions have set legal limits for blood-THC concentration while driving. In some cases, any detectable recent use of cannabis is grounds for a driver being charged. Refer to your local legislation for specific details. Remember: police officers are trained to detect when someone is impaired by cannabis, and have means for confirming their suspicions (such as blood and urine tests).

A study by the American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety estimates that ten percent of drivers involved in fatal motor vehicle accidents in Washington State between 2010 and 2014 had detectable levels of THC in their blood at the time of the crash (<https://www.aaafoundation.org/sites/default/files/PrevalenceOfMarijuanaInvolvement.pdf>).

From Food Processor's Institute course - Cannabis and the Workplace



Cannabis is the scientific name for the plant. The term marijuana became common in the United States about 100 years ago as anti-cannabis and anti-immigrant advocates wanted to link recreational use of the plant to migrant workers from Mexico.

Policy

Why a Drug and Alcohol Policy?

One of the best ways to deal proactively with the issue of cannabis use in the workplace is by having a comprehensive drug and alcohol policy. Drug and alcohol policies are a proactive way to reduce problems and be prepared to deal with any problems that do occur.

A drug and alcohol policy will:

- Avoid confusion and misunderstanding by clearly spelling out expectations for employees regarding drug and alcohol use while on the job
- Create consequences for non-compliance
- Allow for earlier detection of drug and alcohol use or abuse in the workplace
- Allow for earlier intervention to help employees who have, or are at risk of, developing substance-use problems
- Ensure that substance-use problems in the workplace are addressed
- Help employers meet their legal obligations to provide a safe working environment

A good drug and alcohol policy should minimize:

- Absenteeism
- Workplace accidents
- Grievances
- Disciplinary action
- Litigation

A drug and alcohol policy should be separate from any workplace discipline policies. Employers should try to treat drug and alcohol misuse primarily as a medical/ health and wellness issue rather than a disciplinary issue. Taking this approach will encourage employees to come forward to seek help without fear of disciplinary action. The drug and alcohol policy can refer to workplace disciplinary policies under sections covering what happens when attempts to resolve substance-use issues fail and there are repeated infractions.

From Food Processor's Institute course -- Cannabis and the Workplace

About Food Processing Skills Canada

We are Food Processing Skills Canada (FPSC) – a non-profit skills council, providing training courses, programs, and educational tools for the Canadian and international food and beverage workforce. Our wide variety of projects and materials provide national support for the industry to address human resources issues, as well as ensure Canadian processors are equipped with affordable learning tools, standards, and resources to face the future confidently. To this day, we stand as a top influencer and resource for the industry.

As part of its mandate to lead, support and provide a collective knowledgeable response to food processing industry human resources challenges, FPSC has developed competency frameworks. These developed benchmarks in job expectations will lead to the advancement of a professional workforce that will have the skills, knowledge and abilities to meet the demands of a dynamic food industry.

SOURCES

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According to a CNN news report, the reason April 20 became known as Weed Day stems from a secret code used by a group of high school students in the 1970s. This group, who attended San Rafael High School in northern California, would often meet at 4:20 p.m. to get high. The 4:20 time became a code that later spread across the state and eventually elsewhere.