

Managing the Impact of Marijuana in the Workplace

Marijuana is set to be legalized for recreational use as of October 17, 2018. For many employers still struggling with how to accommodate employees who have been prescribed cannabis for medicinal purposes, this will create new challenges and questions. How do you define impairment and fitness for work? What types of tasks are safety sensitive? These are key concerns that leadership needs to manage before the legislation passes.

Here is a sampling of insights from the [CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network](#) panel discussion, captured in the [Marijuana in the Workplace: Conversations About the Impact on Employers and Employees](#), a White Paper published by WSPS.

Participants agreed that understanding all of the nuances of this issue will take time and experience.

What employers need to know:-

- Prior to legalization, marijuana is the most prevalently used illicit drug in Canada.
- Consuming recreational marijuana at work is and will remain illegal.
- Marijuana use, particularly THC products (the principal psychoactive constituent), can cause residual impairment for 24 to 48 hours.
- The legislation may affect the entire organization, not just safety-sensitive positions.

Basic principles when dealing with marijuana in the workplace

- Safety should always come first.
- Protecting employees' rights is important, but employers have rights too.

How to move your organization forward

- Review highlights of the federal cannabis legislation and Ontario's new [workplace rules](#).
- Update your hazard assessments to include the potential for impairment.
- Create a policy and program on the use of any substance that can cause impairment. Write the policy in a way that leaves room for dialogue. Include definitions of key terms, such as "impairment" and "fitness to work".
- Consider the entire organization's needs, not just safety-sensitive positions.
- Consult with stakeholders and experts.
- Follow what leading organizations are doing, such as the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). In the White Paper, you'll find an interview with Megan MacRae, the TTC's Executive Director, Human Resources, on the organization's drug and alcohol testing program.

How WSPS can help

- Download WSPS' White Paper, [Marijuana in the Workplace: Conversations About the Impact on Employers and Employees](#)
- Sign up for education opportunities:
 - [Impairment and Cannabis in the Workplace](#) (90 minute online e-course)