



Marijuana Use and Driving Facts

Did You Know?

- People who use marijuana before driving are nearly twice as likely to cause a car crash as those not under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Nationwide, 6 to 11 percent of drivers responsible for fatal accidents test positive for marijuana.
- Research has shown that marijuana's negative effects on attention, memory, and learning can last for days or weeks after the immediate effects of the drug wear off.
- While alcohol is the predominant substance in fatal crashes, marijuana is the second most frequently found substance in crash-involved drivers, according to an NHTSA study. Alcohol and marijuana are also frequently found together, which results in a dramatic decrease in driving performance and spike in impairment levels.
- Long-term use can lead to dependency. Withdrawal symptoms mirror those of nicotine, which can include irritability, difficulty sleeping, cravings, and anxiety.
- Marijuana, even in low to moderate doses, negatively affects driving performance, such as the ability to avoid collisions with evasive action. The effect of combining moderate doses of alcohol and moderate doses of marijuana resulted in a dramatic decrease in driving performance and increased the level of impairment from a .04 BAC (alcohol alone) to impairment comparable to up to 0.14 BAC (alcohol and marijuana combined).
- A study of patients in a shock-trauma unit who had been in collisions revealed that 15 percent of those who had been driving a car or motorcycle had been smoking marijuana and another 17 percent had both THC (the psychoactive chemical causes the "high" and impairment) and alcohol in their blood. A roadside study of reckless drivers (not under the influence of alcohol) showed that one in three tested positive for marijuana and an additional 18 percent tested positive for marijuana and cocaine.

Sources:

- Month-by-Month Prevention, Promotion, Call to Action, and Planning Guide, SAMHSA
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/impaired-driv_factsheet.html