

The State of Marijuana

WHAT STUDIES SHOW



Highlights in 2026

Recent movement on the federal level to reschedule marijuana has left many questioning what this means for the workplace. While the full extent of this change is still to be seen, let’s take a look at what we do know about the impact of marijuana use in general, on the road, and at work.



Marijuana Use in General

“The unfortunate truth is that the loosening of marijuana policies — especially the decision to legalize pot without adequately regulating it — has led to worse outcomes than many Americans expected. It is time to acknowledge reality and change course.”
NY Times

Among people 12 or older, past-year use of the following substances increased between 2021 and 2024.

- **Marijuana:** increased from 19.0% in 2021 to 22.3% in 2024
- **Hallucinogens:** increased from 2.7% in 2021 to 3.6% in 2024

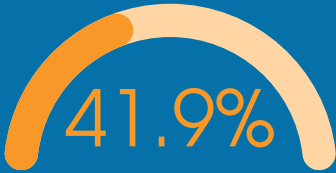
It’s Time for America to Admit That It Has a Marijuana Problem <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/09/opinion/regulate-legalized-marijuana.htm>
<https://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/20250728/samhsa-releases-annual-national-survey-on-drug-use-and-health>

Marijuana Use on the Road

Research in Montgomery County, Ohio, shows that from January 2018 to September 2024, THC was found in 41.9% of deceased drivers over that six-year period, which includes the legalization of recreational marijuana in 2023.

A 2020 report from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety revealed an alarming connection between marijuana use and serious traffic accidents. Researchers compared data on the fatal crashes in the state of Washington before and after recreational marijuana was legalized. They found that:

- Prior to legalization, about 8.8% of drivers involved in fatal crashes tested positive for THC.
- In the 12 to 24 months following legalization, that percentage more than doubled to 18%.
- By 2017, the fifth year after legalization, 21.7% of drivers involved in fatal crashes were THC-positive.



THC was found in 41.9%
of deceased drivers

Fatal Crashes Involving Drivers Who Test Positive for Marijuana Increase after State Legalizes Drug,” AAA Newsroom, January 30, 2020, <https://newsroom.aaa.com/2020/01/fatal-crashes-involving-drivers-who-test-positive-for-marijuana-increase-after-state-legalizes-drug/>
<https://www.facs.org/media-center/press-releases/2025/over-40-of-deceased-drivers-in-motor-vehicle-crashes-test-positive-for-thc-study-shows/>

Marijuana Use at Work

According to the 2025 Quest Drug Testing Index, marijuana positivity rates in 2022, 2023, and 2024 were nearly double in states that allow recreational marijuana compared to states where it is not legal.



Table 25. Marijuana Positivity by 2023 State Legalized Use Status – Urine Drug Tests
(For General U.S. Workforce, as a percentage of all tests for Marijuana Metabolite)

Drug Category	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Recreational Use	2.5%	2.7%	3.1%	3.6%	4.1%	4.8%	5.5%	5.8%	5.9%
Medical Use Only	2.1%	2.1%	2.4%	2.7%	3.2%	3.6%	4.0%	4.0%	3.9%
Neither Recreational nor Medical Use	2.7%	2.8%	2.7%	2.7%	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%	3.3%	3.3%
National	2.5%	2.6%	2.8%	3.1%	3.6%	3.9%	4.3%	4.5%	4.5%

<https://www.questdiagnostics.com/content/dam/corporate/restricted/documents/drug-testing-index/DTI-2025-Tables.pdf>

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