

Three Cannabis-Impaired Driving Myths

Caleb McMillan :: 2023-02-15



What are three [cannabis](#)-impaired driving myths? In a piece for *Farmers Forum*, James Pascual reports that drug-impaired driving charges have more than doubled since Canada legalized cannabis.

Of course, the “significant increase in the prevalence of drug use” in drivers includes alcohol and prescription medicines. As well, plenty of people were driving on cannabis before. The difference is now [police](#) have the tools and training to look for it.

Pascual’s article is heavy on opinion and light on facts. For example, he writes, “you can find more [cannabis stores](#) than Tim Hortons coffee shops in [Ontario](#), [so] it’s not surprising that drug-impaired driving has also increased.”

This is dishonest. Tim Hortons is a coffee franchise, one of many, that exists alongside numerous independently owned and operated coffee shops. [Ontario’s cannabis stores](#) are also numerous, independently owned and operated.

An honest approach would compare the number of [Ontario cannabis stores](#) with the number of *all* [Ontario](#) coffee shops, not just Tim Hortons locations.

I only bring this up because [Pascual had written](#) favourably of ivermectin for COVID-19 when “public health” was trying to censor this information. In fact, *Farmers Forum* has been excellent on the [Truckers Freedom Convoy](#).

So their BS detector goes off when the government uses a flu virus to crack down on civil liberties.

But cannabis? Apparently, *Farmers Forum* has no problem taking Ottawa at its word. So for Pascual’s sake and others, let’s dispel three common cannabis-impaired driving myths.

#3 Cannabis-Impaired Driving Myth: You Have to Wait Two Hours



According to Canada’s legal cannabis rules, users must wait at least two hours from when they consume to when they drive. Now, for new users, this is a good rule of thumb.

It’s common to drive caffeinated. It’s often encouraged. But consider a teenager who is new to driving *and* new to drinking coffee.

This driver would have an increased heart rate, increased sense of nervousness, and reduced fine motor skills, which can affect driving performance. However, the “experts” consider impairment caused by caffeine lower than that caused by other drugs, such as cannabis. So lawmakers look the other way.

At the end of the day, this issue comes down to familiarity and bias. Someone who regularly consumes sativa cannabis during the day (the way some people drink coffee) probably shouldn’t wait two hours before driving.

In fact, this person should consume before getting behind the wheel. Otherwise, they’ll be groggy and unfocused since they haven’t smoked in two hours.

Of course, not everyone uses cannabis like caffeine. For those who like it before bed, the idea of going out and about during the day with [THC](#) (and driving!) sounds incredibly uncomfortable.

But to ignore the people who do use cannabis like coffee, to claim they are driving “impaired” and therefore dangerous, is simple reefer madness.

It’s like looking at liquor stores with drive-thru windows and assuming the worst.

#2 Cannabis-Impaired Driving Myth: Breathalyzers Accurately Measure Impairment



We've covered this cannabis-impaired driving myth before. People initially invented breathalyzers to detect alcohol in a person's breath. For this purpose, they are more or less reliable indicators (although not perfect).

However, measuring impairment from cannabis is more complex, as THC (the main psychoactive component in cannabis) can stay in a person's body for an extended period. Even after the psychoactive effects have worn off.

The body metabolizes THC differently than alcohol. There is no clear correlation between the amount of THC in a person's blood or saliva and their level of impairment.

For example, Canadian authorities use the Dräger Drug Test 5000 for roadside sobriety tests. But this machine doesn't detect impairment. It looks for the presence of certain drugs or their metabolites in the body.

As well, the Dräger test can produce false positives. But overall, if the police need to run a bunch of tests to determine your level of impairment — just how impaired can you be?

Are you being subject to a Dräger test because you were driving erratically? Or was this a result of a roadside checkpoint? One of the many ways the State limits mobility rights under the guise of "public health."

#1 Cannabis-Impaired Driving Myth: Cannabis Impairs Everyone

As we saw with the coffee example, impairment is subjective. Whether cannabis affects your ability to be a safe driver will depend on your tolerance and experience level. This cannabis-impaired driving myth results from a general misconception about the different drugs in our everyday lives.

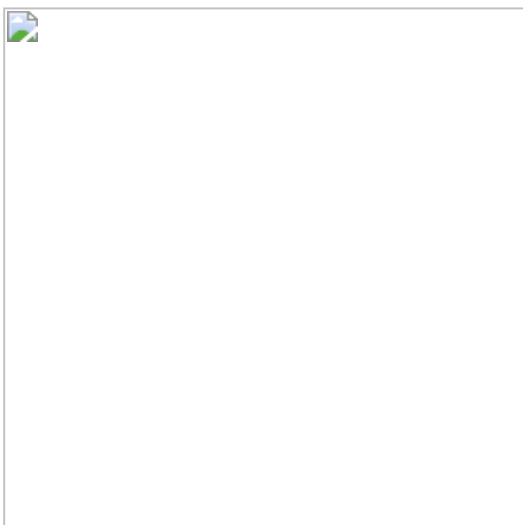
Your accident likelihood increases when you mess with your reaction time, attention, and coordination. Anyone who has driven with kids or pets (or has been distracted by texting or, thanks to road rage) knows you don't need drugs to increase this risk.

That said, alcohol and cars are always a bad idea. But depending on your dose and experience, caffeine, nicotine, or cannabis can alter your driving abilities for good or ill.

For some, caffeine, nicotine, or cannabis means distracted, dangerous driving. As a non-nicotine user, I can imagine the head rush that comes from a cigarette would temporarily impair me. I wouldn't want to be driving 100km an hour when that happens.

Others require one or more of these substances for a fully conscious, safe driving experience. If that worries you, let's [privatize the roads](#) and let the new owners craft their own drugged-driving policies.

What is “Cannabis Impairment”?



Of course, critics will say none of these are cannabis-impaired driving myths. Regular cannabis users simply aren't aware of their impairment, thanks to their tolerance to THC.

But this fails to define what impairment even is. If someone uses phyto[cannabinoids](#) to alleviate anxiety, wouldn't forgoing this medicine impair them?

Let's say you have to drive somewhere, but you have a migraine. Your options are either to drive “sober” with a pounding headache. Or take some aspirin and drive “impaired” since it says right on the bottle that it will impair your motor function skills.

Wouldn't it be better to drive without a migraine? Even if it means taking drugs before driving?

Despite what some may claim, there is a significant lack of quality research linking cannabis to increased automobile accidents.

[Research](#) into cannabis-impaired driving has been observational. These studies haven't established causality, nor have they been replicated. They are simply opinions with a [Science™](#) label attached.

Someone capable of criticizing the COVID public health regime should be aware of this.

Lies about cannabis are nothing new. Old reefer madness propaganda claimed cannabis caused black men to rape white women.

Now we're being told cannabis will double the risk of fatal car crashes.

For some common sense, let's recall what Professor Iain McGregor, Academic Director of the Lambert Initiative, told an Australian Senate committee.

Cannabis and driving is actually a very complicated area. The tendency is to look at it through the prism of alcohol, but there are actually almost diametrically opposite effects for cannabis relative to alcohol. With alcohol, people overestimate their ability and tend to take risks as a result. With cannabis, people actually feel impaired... When they do drive, there are quite reliable effects like a lower speed and a bigger distance between them and the car in front.

Continuing,

If you give someone cannabis for the first time, they'll be very impaired for a couple of hours after consumption, but, if someone is a patient and they have used cannabis for two years, chronically every day, you will really struggle to find any sort of impairment whatsoever. So we need more research and we need more enlightened information for patients rather than just saying: 'Don't drive.'

And there's also UBC doctoral candidate Michelle St. Pierre's research into cannabis-impaired driving myths:

We found that there was actually no difference in cognition between the sober condition and the stoned condition.

Footnote(s)

<https://farmersforum.com/canada-goes-to-pot-cannabis-impaired-driving-has-skyrocketed/>

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Medicinalcannabis/Report/

<https://gem.cbc.ca/media/the-nature-of-things/s62e03>