

# DRUG-IMPAIRED DRIVING



## WHAT IS IMPAIRED DRIVING?

Any amount of a substance that impairs one's judgment and impairs one's ability to operate a motor vehicle and react in a timely manner. The most common substances detected in impaired drivers are alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, and over-the-counter medications.

## WHY IS DRUG-IMPAIRED DRIVING SO DANGEROUS?

Drugs alter perception, mental processes, attention, balance, coordination, reaction time, and other abilities required for safe driving. With lesser reaction time and impaired judgement, crashes are more likely to occur, which can result in injury or even death.

## WHAT SUBSTANCES ARE USED THE MOST WHEN DRIVING?

After alcohol, marijuana is the drug most often linked to car crashes, including those involving deaths. A nationwide study of deadly crashes found that almost 37% of drivers who tested positive for drugs had used marijuana.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, [www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/drugged-driving](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/drugged-driving)



## HOW DANGEROUS IS MARIJUANA-IMPAIRED DRIVING?

In Washington State, the share of drivers who tested positive for active THC after a fatal crash doubled since the state legalized marijuana, jumping from 8% from 2008–2012 to 18% from 2013–2017.

Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

## DID YOU KNOW?

- According to the 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 18.5 million people drove under the influence of alcohol and 12.6 million people drove under the influence of illicit drugs.

Source: 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

- In 2019, 28 people in the U.S. died per day in alcohol-related vehicle crashes – that's one person every 52 minutes.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

- Marijuana-related traffic deaths increased 151% in the 5-year average (2013–2017) since Colorado legalized recreational marijuana.

Source: The Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado: The Impact, Rocky Mountain High Drug Trafficking Area, September 2018.

## FOR DRUG USE PREVENTION INFORMATION, VISIT DEA'S WEBSITES:

For parents, caregivers, and educators  
[GetSmartAboutDrugs.com](http://GetSmartAboutDrugs.com)

For college and university campuses  
[CampusDrugPrevention.gov](http://CampusDrugPrevention.gov)

For teens  
[JustThinkTwice.com](http://JustThinkTwice.com)