

Office of Medical Marijuana Use

Florida's Official Source for Medical Use

Know the Facts
Impaired Driving

Impaired driving, also known as driving under the influence (DUI), happens when an individual operates a vehicle while impaired or intoxicated. Impaired driving is illegal in Florida.¹ DUI laws apply to more than just alcohol.² Florida law also prohibits the operation of a vehicle when an individual is impaired or intoxicated by other substances including marijuana, illicit drugs, prescribed medications, over-the-counter medications, and others.¹⁻³

Effects of Drugs and Driving

Specific drugs affect your brain in different ways, and can have unexpected impacts on your driving skills.⁴ The effects that marijuana can have on an individual's ability to drive is due, in-part, to the compound delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) found in marijuana, which can have a psychoactive, mind-altering effect on areas of the brain that control body movements, balance, motor coordination, memory, and judgment. When driving, marijuana can impair lane tracking abilities, increase lane weaving, slow reaction times, and reduce the ability to make decisions.⁵⁻⁶

THC Onset, Duration, and Effects

Depending on the method of THC consumption, the impact can be felt in different ways. Regardless of the type of marijuana or the length of effects, do not consume THC products if you plan on driving.

- **Inhaled Consumption:** The psychoactive effects of THC can be felt within minutes after smoking flower or using an electronic device to inhale vapor, with peak effects reportedly occurring within 3 to 10 minutes.⁷ The effects of inhaled marijuana can last from 2 to 6 hours.⁷
- **Edible and Oral Consumption:** THC can also be ingested by eating, chewing, or drinking marijuana products, called edibles. Examples of edibles are pills, tablets, capsules, gummies, candy, chocolates, drinks (seltzer, soda), and baked goods (biscuits, brownies, cookies, etc.). Peak effects of edibles can occur 1 to 2 hours after ingestion because the drug must first pass through the digestive system and can further be delayed 30 minutes to an hour if consumed with fatty foods or drinks.⁷ The effects of edible THC can last for 6 to 12 hours.⁷
- **Topical Use:** Topical marijuana products are applied directly to the skin. Use of THC through oils, gels, salves, creams and patches may take five minutes to up to two hours for the effects of THC to be experienced. The duration varies based on the product used.⁷
- **Sublingual Consumption:** THC effects from sublingual ingestion (placing products such as liquids, tinctures, or dissolvable tablets under the tongue) occur within 15 minutes to up to 1 hour, and can have an effect that may last 4 to 6 hours. Sublingual marijuana products absorb fast, so their effects are usually felt more quickly than edibles.⁷

Combining Substances

Driving becomes increasingly dangerous when marijuana is used with other drugs or alcohol. Combining more than one substance may produce stronger and more unpredictable effects than a single drug. For example, using marijuana and alcohol together can significantly increase impairment.⁸

Preventing Impaired Driving

If you or someone you know intends to drive, it's important to avoid the use of alcohol or drugs, including marijuana.

If you plan to use, are using, or have used alcohol or drugs, including marijuana:

- Choose not to drive and remind your friends and family to do the same.
- Assign a trusted designated driver who will not drink or use intoxicating drugs to transport you to and from your destination.
- If you are unable to have a designated driver, secure transportation by using a rideshare service or calling a taxi.⁹

The Office of Medical Marijuana Use

The Office of Medical Marijuana Use (OMMU) is charged with writing and implementing the Florida Department of Health's rules for medical marijuana use to ensure the health and safety of the public.¹⁰

For additional information about Florida's OMMU, please visit **KnowTheFactsMMJ.com** or call **800-808-9580**.

Sources

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10. § 381.986, Fla. Stat.; Art. X, S. 29(c)(4), Fla. Const. KnowTheFactsMMJ.com.