

CANNABIS DUI STATISTICS AND TRENDS IN COLORADO

No evidence of correlation between cannabis regulation and traffic safety risk indicators

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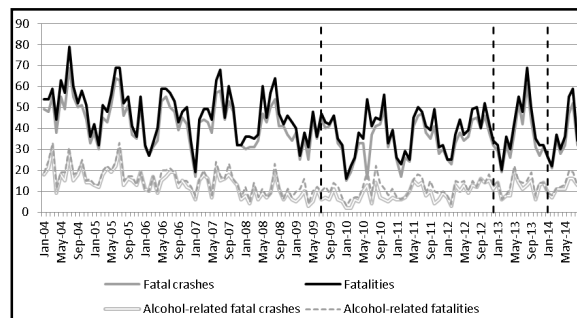
Cannabis DUIs relatively uncommon after cannabis legalized for adults

Colorado law enforcement and courts did not track cannabis-impaired driving prior to 2014, the year adult-use cannabis sales began, which means there is no way to compare cannabis DUI occurrence before and after cannabis became legally available to adults. In 2014¹ and 2015² less than 15% of all DUI citations issued by state troopers involved suspected cannabis use, whether used alone or with other substances, and under 8% involved cannabis alone. Despite legal access to cannabis for adults, the overwhelming majority of impaired driving incidents in Colorado involve alcohol and drugs other than cannabis. The total number of cannabis-related DUIs decreased slightly (1.3%) from 2014 to 2015, but more data is needed to determine if the decline will become a trend.

Traffic fatalities not correlated with cannabis policy change

Data from the Colorado Department of Transportation shows that fatal car crashes are not correlated with medical marijuana regulation in June of 2009 or legalization for adult use in November of 2012 (Figure 1).³ In 2014, 32.7% of all fatal crashes were alcohol-related⁴ while only 12.3% of drivers involved in fatal crashes tested positive for cannabis⁵. In addition, the vast majority (72%) of Colorado's frequent cannabis consumers do not use cannabis and drive.⁶

Figure 1



National study shows no increased crash risk from cannabis

In the first large-scale case control study of drug and alcohol crash risk in the U.S., National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) researchers found no increased crash risk associated with cannabis use when controlling for demographic factors and alcohol use.⁷ The most precisely controlled study of its kind,⁸ NHTSA's key finding contradicts the widely cited cannabis crash risk estimate of 92%,⁹ which is found to greatly exaggerate cannabis crash risk due to methodological and measurement errors.¹⁰ NHTSA's findings are supported by a meta-analysis that found that studies that controlled for confounding variables and measured actual cannabis use typically found reduced or no crash risk associated with cannabis use.¹¹ A similar meta-analysis published in 2016 found a small (<1.2) but significant cannabis crash risk after controls, but the figure may be artificially inflated due to varying measurement quality among studies sampled, so actual risk is likely close to NHTSA's estimate of zero (1.0).

¹ Ingold, John. "Marijuana involved in 12 percent of Colorado State Patrol DUI cases". <http://www.thecannabist.co/2015/01/30/colorado-state-patrol-stoned-driving-statistics-dui-cases/28879/>

² Sun, Chhun. "Report: Marijuana-related DUI citations in Colorado dropped slightly in 2015". <http://coloradosprings.com/report-marijuana-related-dui-citations-in-colorado-dropped-slightly-in-2015/article/1569870>

³ Miron, J. "Marijuana Policy in Colorado." *CATO Institute Working Paper*. October 23, 2014.

⁴ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "2014 Traffic Safety Performance Measures for Colorado". http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-30/nca/STSI/8_CO/2014/8_CO_2014.htm

⁵ Colorado Department of Transportation, "Drugged Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes". https://www.codot.gov/safety/alcohol-and-impaired-driving/druggeddriving/assets/DrugFatal_DataasofJanuary2012.pdf

⁶ Barker, Lisa. & Baumann, Carsten. "Influential Factors in Healthy Living Survey (IFHL)," *Retail Marijuana Public Health Advisory Committee*. January 12, 2015. <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/monitoring-trends-marijuana-use>

⁷ Compton, Richard. & Berning, Amy. "Drug and Alcohol Crash Risk," *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*. Feb. 2015.

⁸ Press Release, *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*, Feb. 2015.

⁹ Asbridge, Hayden & Cartwright. "Acute cannabis consumption and motor vehicle collision risk: systematic review of observational studies and meta-analysis," *British Medical Journal*, 2012.

¹⁰ Rogeberg, O. & Elvik, R. "The effects of cannabis intoxication on motor vehicle collision revisited and revised." *Addiction*. 2016.

¹¹ Elvik, R. "Risk of Road Accident Associated with the Use of Drugs: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Evidence from Epidemiological Studies." *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 60, 254–267. June 5, 2012.