Drug-Impaired Driving: What’s New

Jim Hedlund
Highway Safety North

GHSA Annual Meeting
Atlanta GA
August 28, 2018
Drug-Impaired Driving
Marijuana and Opioids Raise Critical Issues for States

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
RESPONSIBILITY.ORG
What’s New (and what you might not know)

- Drugs and driving
  - Problem size, trends
  - Public awareness
  - Detecting drugs at the roadside
- Marijuana and opioids
  - What they are
  - Driver views and use
  - State laws
FIGURE 1
Drug and alcohol, percentage of fatally-injured drivers, known test results

Source: NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting Systems (FARS)
From 2015 to 2016:
- Drug presence in fatal drivers probably increased slightly
- Alcohol presence about the same

From 2006 to 2016:
- Drug presence in fatal drivers increased substantially
- Alcohol presence decreased somewhat

More fatal drivers drug-positive than alcohol-positive, 2015 and 2016

Conclusions from FARS, known test results
Data limitations don’t allow more precise conclusions
Multiple Drugs, Drugs and Alcohol

2016 fatal drivers
- 50.5% of drug-positive drivers had 2 or more drugs
- 40.7% of drug-positive drivers also were positive for alcohol
- 48.5% of alcohol-positive drivers also were positive for some drug

Another way of looking at it: 2016 fatal drivers
- 17.5% were positive for both alcohol and drugs
- 18.5% were positive for alcohol but no drugs
- 25.5% were positive for drugs but no alcohol
- 61.5% were positive for either alcohol or drugs
- 38.5% were negative for both alcohol and drugs
FIGURE 12
Drug-impaired driving campaigns

Click to view states’ driving campaigns
Detecting Drug Use

- **Oral fluid**
  - Several models now available
  - Good initial screen; takes 5 minutes, costs about $20 per test
  - Pilot tests in several states

- **Marijuana breath test**
  - At least 2 developers; perhaps pilot tests in 2018
  - “The Pot Breathalyzer Is Here. Maybe.” NPR Aug. 4, 2018

- **Fingerprint**
  - In development
Marijuana

- In 41% of drug-positive dead drivers in 2016; up from 34% in 2006

Opioids

- In 20% of drug-positive dead drivers in 2016; up from 17% in 2006
Marijuana

What it is
- Active: delta-9 THC; remains in body several hours
- Inactive: metabolites; remain in body days or weeks
- FARS: 8 marijuana codes

Driver views
- Regular users don’t think marijuana impair their driving
FIGURE 5
State marijuana possession and use laws

*Louisiana has a medical marijuana law but implementation is limited; NCSL does not consider Louisiana a medical marijuana state.

Click to highlight states in applicable category

SHOW ALL | Legal Use | Medical Only | Decriminalized | Medical/Decrim.
Legalized for adult use | Legalized for medical use only | Decriminalized | Legal for medical use / decriminalized

Source: Adapted from NCSL, 2018a.
FIGURE 6
State marijuana impaired driving laws—DUID

Click to highlight states in applicable category

SHOW ALL  ZT THC / Metabs  ZT THC only  Per se THC  Permissible Inf.

Zero Tolerance THC and Metabolites  Zero Tolerance THC only  Per se THC  Permissible Inference

Source: Adapted from NCSL, 2018b.
Recreational
- 8 states and DC as of Jan. 1
- Introduced in 21 states, enacted in VT, died in 15, on November ballot in MI

Medical
- 29 states and DC as of Jan. 1
- Introduced in 14 states, died in 13, on November ballot in OK and UT and perhaps MO

Decriminalization
- 22 states and DC as of Jan. 1
- Introduced in 12 states, died in 9

As of August 8, 2018
Opioids

What they are
- Opium products: heroin
- Synthetics: fentanyl
- Prescription pain medications: oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet), hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab)
- FARS: 159 opioid codes

Driver views
- Illegal use is dangerous
FIGURE 7

Opioid prescriptions, millions

Source: Pezella, et. al. (2017)
**FIGURE 8**
State opioid impaired driving laws

Adapted from NCSL, 2018b.