



For Immediate Release

More education and awareness needed as new drug-impaired driving rules take effect July 1

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Most Ontario drivers not familiar with existing fines, penalties and dangers of marijuana-impaired driving

Thornhill, ON, June 28, 2018 – As new drug-impaired driving rules take effect in Ontario July 1, [CAA South Central Ontario \(CAA SCO\)](#) is reminding motorists of the dangers, fines and penalties of drug-impaired driving.

As of July 1, 2018, under Ontario's Highway Traffic Act, tougher penalties will take effect for young and novice drivers who have alcohol in their system and will add matching penalties for drugs. There are also new penalties for commercial vehicle drivers who have the presence of alcohol or drugs in their system.

"CAA SCO supports Ontario's zero tolerance approach to both alcohol and drugs for all young, novice and commercial vehicle drivers," said Elliott Silverstein, manager of government relations at CAA SCO. "In addition to these measures, more work is required ahead of cannabis legalization to ensure all drivers are aware of both the dangers and penalties associated with driving while drug impaired."

The new rules for young and novice drivers align drug-impaired and alcohol-impaired offences to ensure there is a zero tolerance while they are in their formative years of driving and most at risk of being in a crash. Cannabis, like many other drugs, slows reaction time and increases a driver's chance of being in a collision.

Drivers found to be impaired by any drug, including cannabis, will face serious penalties, including an immediate licence suspension, financial penalties, as well as possible vehicle impoundment, criminal record and jail time.

New measures that go into effect as of July 1, 2018, include the following:

- **Young and Novice Drivers:** In addition to alcohol, young and novice drivers, defined as drivers age 21 or under and novice drivers of any age (with G1, G2, M1, or M2 licenses), are prohibited from having any presence of cannabis in their system as well as other drugs that can be detected by an oral fluid screening device.
- **Commercial Drivers:** Drivers of vehicles requiring an A-F class licence, vehicles requiring a Commercial Vehicle Operator's Registration (CVOR) and road building machines are prohibited from having any presence of alcohol or cannabis in their system as well as other drugs that can be detected by an oral fluid screening device.



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Research conducted on behalf of CAA SCO by Ipsos in August 2017, shows that in Ontario:

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- Two-in-five cannabis users who have used cannabis in the past three months have operated a vehicle while under the influence of marijuana.
- Most Ontario drivers are not familiar with the current fines/penalties for marijuana-impaired driving.
- Ontario drivers believe there will be an increase in the frequency of marijuana-impaired driving, and that there may be more collisions due to cannabis use once legalized.
- 71 per cent of those surveyed say that cannabis is as dangerous as both alcohol impairment and distracted driving on our roads.
- Respondents also agreed that public education remains the number one area for preventing marijuana-impaired driving.

As a long-standing advocate for road safety, CAA SCO's focus is to ensure that road safety and public education on the recent legislative changes in Ontario remains at the forefront of efforts to prepare for the legalization of cannabis.

About CAA South Central Ontario

As a leader and advocate for road safety and mobility, CAA South Central Ontario is a not-for-profit auto club which represents the interests of over 2 million members. For over a century, CAA has collaborated with communities, police services and governments to help keep drivers and their families safe while travelling on our roads.

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