



**For Immediate Release**

## New research shows that 1.9 million Ontario motorists have driven under the influence of cannabis

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*A CAA commissioned Ipsos study shows that there are valid concerns about road safety and cannabis-impaired driving among novice motorists in Ontario*

**Thornhill, ON, October 4, 2018** – With the legalization of cannabis less than two weeks away, [CAA South Central Ontario \(CAA SCO\)](#) is releasing new research showing that 1.9 million Ontario motorists have driven under the influence of cannabis, and over 735,000 have done so in the last three months.

The statistically representative study, commissioned by CAA and conducted by Ipsos in July 2018, surveyed 1000 Ontarians over the age of 19 who own, lease or drive a vehicle and have a valid driver's license.

One of the big issues uncovered is the prevalence of 'poly-users', people who consume cannabis and alcohol or other mixed substances during the same time period. CAA's research shows that 205,800 Ontario drivers admit to drinking alcohol and using cannabis before getting behind the wheel in the last 3 months.

Those who have driven a car under the influence of cannabis and alcohol, tended to do so in social settings such as gatherings with family and friends and at bars/clubs/pubs.

"Road safety needs to be prioritized as a leading issue as cannabis becomes legal in the coming weeks, but it's clear that the focus can't solely be on cannabis-impaired driving," said Elliott Silverstein, manager, government relations, CAA SCO. "We need to take an integrated view of the dangerous behaviours that impact road safety in Ontario and focus public education and enforcement efforts accordingly."

Of those surveyed, those that drive under the influence of cannabis are more likely to be male (69 per cent), between the ages of 25 and 34, and novice drivers (39 per cent), providing important insight for education and enforcement.

"The fact that those who drive under the influence of cannabis are most likely to be young, novice drivers, with less experience on the road, is something that we should all be concerned about," continued Silverstein.

Ontario introduced a zero tolerance (any drugs or alcohol) approach for those with G1/G2 licenses as of July 1, 2018.

There is concern among current cannabis users who drive, that there will be more cannabis impaired drivers on the road following legalization (57 per cent) and over half (52 per cent) feel that they drive worse than a sober driver when under the influence of cannabis.

"There is a common perception that cannabis users feel that they drive better when under the influence of the drug," continued Silverstein. "This research shows that that is not necessarily the case and that current cannabis users are also concerned about impairment and road safety."



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The poll has also identified that 60 per cent of drivers surveyed, support investments in public education campaigns to encourage safe driving and three out of four, support strong fines and penalties for drug-impaired driving. Seventy-five per cent support investments in technology and equipment for roadside testing for law enforcement.

As a long-standing advocate for road safety, CAA SCO's focus is to ensure that road safety and public education remains at the forefront of efforts to prepare for and manage 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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