

American Automobile Association: Marijuana users take more risks behind the wheel

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MADISON, Wisc., (April 13, 2021) – As marijuana decriminalization efforts pick up steam across Wisconsin and legal sales continue to increase in neighboring states, AAA is issuing a warning about the dangers of driving impaired. New AAA research suggests drivers who consumed marijuana within the past 30 days were more likely to engage in risky behavior like speeding, texting, intentionally running red lights, and aggressive driving.

“Regardless of whether marijuana is legal or prescribed, driving under the influence of the drug is illegal and extremely dangerous,” said Nick Jarmusz, director of public affairs for AAA – The Auto Club Group. “Although some drivers think marijuana makes them a better driver, research shows it can inhibit concentration, slow reaction times, and cloud judgment. It’s important that drivers know the risk that comes with marijuana and never drive impaired.”

It should be noted, however, that since alcohol consumption is still far more common, the risks taken by those who consume it are still a major concern. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety’s annual Traffic Safety Culture Index found that users of both marijuana *and* alcohol are among the riskiest drivers on the road. These motorists identified as someone who consumed alcohol and used marijuana in the past 30 days, and in some cases, they may have used both at the same time. They also engage in various other dangerous driving behaviors far more than drivers who consume either just alcohol or abstain from either drinking alcohol or using marijuana. This Foundation research was published in January 2021 in the peer-reviewed journal *Transportation Research Record*. ([See abstract](#))

AAA Analysis of Driving Habits by Marijuana Users

Prevalence of Self-Reported Impaired Driving Behaviors in Relation to Alcohol and Marijuana Use in a Sample of 2,710 U.S. Drivers, Weighted to Represent U.S. Driving Population Ages 16 and Older.

	No Alcohol or Marijuana Use	Alcohol Use Only	Marijuana Use Only	Both Alcohol and Marijuana Use
Total Respondents	1,434	1,036	103	137
DUI*—Alcohol	N/A	14%	N/A	39%
DUI—Marijuana	N/A	N/A	37%	52%
DUI—Prescription Drugs	4%	4%	14%	25%
Riding w/ intoxicated driver	5%	12%	13%	37%
Drowsy driving	21%	25%	22%	35%
Read text ^b	24%	30%	31%	53%
Type/send text ^b	16%	21%	24%	40%
Speed—highway ^b	34%	43%	46%	55%
Speed—residential ^b	28%	35%	46%	55%
Running a red light ^a	28%	32%	38%	48%
Aggressive driving ^a	21%	28%	41%	52%
Drive w/o seatbelt ^b	11%	11%	16%	18%

Note: Percentages include responses of “a few times,” “fairly often,” or “regularly.”

* DUI refers to self-reported driving under the influence, not being charged with a DUI by law enforcement

^a Percentages include responses of “a few times,” “fairly often,” or “regularly.”

^b Percentages include responses of “just once,” “a few times,” “fairly often,” or “regularly.”

Drug Use by the Numbers

Previous research suggests that users who drive high are at least twice as likely to be involved in a crash.

According to government data, alcohol and marijuana are the most widely used drugs in the United States – 139.8 million people aged 12 or older reported drinking alcohol in the past month, and 43.5 million reported using marijuana in the past year. As of today, 16 states and Washington, D.C., have legalized marijuana for recreational use. And in 2021, 15 state legislatures are considering medical or

adult-use marijuana legalization bills.

AAA is committed to educating the public about the dangers of substance-impaired driving. Through AAA Foundation research, AAA is working to improve understanding of the topic and work collaboratively with safety stakeholders to reduce the impact of substance-impaired driving-related crashes.

About AAA - The Auto Club Group

The Auto Club Group (ACG) is the second largest AAA club in North America. ACG and its affiliates provide membership, insurance, banking, financial services, and travel offerings to over 13.5 million members across 13 U.S. states, the province of Quebec and two U.S. territories including Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Puerto Rico, South Carolina and the U.S. Virgin Islands; most of Illinois and Minnesota; and a portion of Indiana. ACG belongs to the national AAA federation with more than 60 million members in the United States and Canada whose mission includes protecting and advancing freedom of mobility and improving traffic safety. Motorists can map a route, identify gas prices, find discounts, book a hotel, and access AAA roadside assistance with the AAA Mobile app for iPhone, iPad and Android. Learn more at AAA.com/mobile. Visit AAA on the Internet at AAA.com.