

NC Department of Health and Human Services
NC Division of Public Health

Cannabis and Impaired Driving

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Forensic Tests for Alcohol Branch

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NC DHHS is the Agency Responsible for:

- Credentialing Chemical Analysts in breath and blood testing
- Training NC Law Enforcement in the detection and testing for impaired drivers
 - Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST)
 - Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement
 - Drug Evaluation and Classification Program
 - Oversight for the DWI Detection programs to include the Drug Evaluation and Classification Program which certifies Drug Recognition Experts
 - All programs are supported by National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the International Association of Chief's of Police

Cannabis/THC

- NIOSH/CDC says cannabis can impair coordination, distort perception and cause difficulty in problem solving, driving critical tasks ^{1,2}
- NIDA states THC can slow reaction times and reduce the ability of the driver to make decisions³

Driver and Traffic Safety Concerns

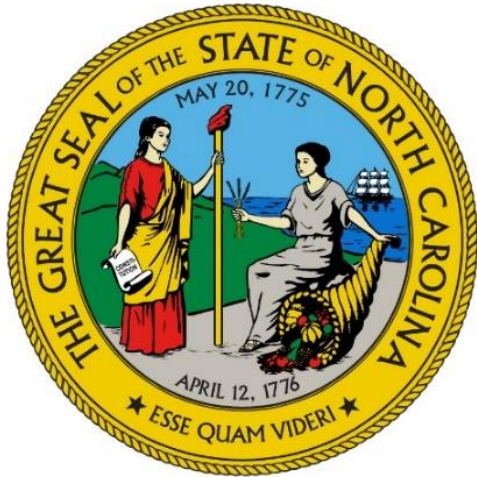
- Nationally
 - Between 2000-2018, percentage of car crash deaths involving cannabis have doubled from 4.8-10.3% ⁴
 - Between 4-6% increase in crashes attributed to cannabis as measured by insurance collision claims ⁵
 - Between 2007-2014, percentage of nighttime weekend drivers who tested positive for TCH increased from 8.6-12.6% ⁶
- NC
 - THC appeared in 49.8% of DWI Blood cases in in 2021 ⁷

Detection of Impaired Driving

- There is no BAC equivalent for THC
 - Roadside psychophysical tests are paramount for detection
 - Basic tests SFST are limited to one leg stand and walk and turn ⁸
 - Advanced training includes a finger to nose, modified Romberg balance test and a lack of convergence test ⁹
 - Roadside tests are simple and easy to administer by a trained officer
 - Tests have been validated to indicate impairment¹⁰
 - DWI research papers have been peer reviewed
 - Blood test is currently preferred method of testing for presence of cannabis

Training Needs

- Need for increased education and training of public and Law Enforcement to make North Carolina roadways safe.
 - Basic skills incorporated into Basic Law Enforcement Training 2023
 - Advanced skill set needed for recognition of drug impaired drivers
 - Increase number of DRE's across North Carolina
 - Increase number of DRE Instructors across North Carolina



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