

3 Years After the Legalization of Marijuana in Canada: An OHS Compliance Update



It's been nearly 3 years since Canada legalized recreational marihuana use. Since 2018, a new 'legal' industry has emerged, tax revenues have grown – though not nearly at the pace predicted – and new variations of cannabis have come to the market. It has not had the dramatic effect of reducing what is now a black market of marijuana sales, and the data is inconclusive about the effects on crime stats. But what can be said with certainty, is that the sky didn't fall, and Canada did not become a nation of Spicolis.

New research from the University of Toronto has shown that statistically, cannabis use DOES NOT increase the risk or instances of workplace accidents – contrary to predictions as well. However, I will say that the research was not assessing workplace safety for a high employee, but somebody that recreationally uses marijuana – a big difference.

And that difference is what really impacts Canadian employers, who now need to look at some drug use from a 'fitness for duty' perspective instead of a criminal/contraband lens. The reality is that workplaces are more unsafe if employees are not 'fit for duty' regardless of what is causing the impairment.