

# Use of Medical Marijuana Can Raise Safety & Other Issues in the Workplace



A recent [\*New York Times\*](#) article discusses an issue arising in US workplaces that's becoming an issue in Canadian workplaces, too.

In the article, Brandon Coats, who was paralyzed in a car crash when he was 16, discusses his use of medical marijuana to relieve painful spasms. He claims to smoke mostly at night and says marijuana use never hurt his performance answering customer calls for a Colorado satellite-TV provider.

But when his employer asked him to take a random drug test, the test came back positive for marijuana and he was fired for violating the company's drug-free workplace rules despite having a medical marijuana card and explaining to his bosses why he used the drug.

The piece goes on to discuss how the growing legal use of marijuana for medical reasons is clashing with workplace policies, most notably drug and alcohol use policies. In fact, some US employers won't even hire an individual who carries a medical marijuana card.

But do such actions constitute disability discrimination? A US court will decide that issue in Coats' case on Sept. 30, 2014.

To learn about these issues in a Canadian context and under

Canadian law and how, as an employer, to navigate this complicated new world, attend our [Oct. 22, 2014 webinar](#), in which Carl Cunningham, a partner at Bennett Jones LLP, will explain the current framework for medical marijuana in Canada, including:

- The *Marijuana for Medical Purposes Regulation*
- Anticipated impact of changes in the law
- Increase in number of users of medical marijuana
- Common uses of medical marijuana
- Forms of medical marijuana.

The webinar will also provide concrete guidance for employers on:

- Reviewing and updating Drug and Alcohol Use Policies
- Responding to initial requests
- Understanding human rights and the duty to accommodate
- Special considerations for safety sensitive roles
- Unique challenges for Independent Medical Exams re: medical marijuana
- Handling requests by non-safety sensitive employees to use medical marijuana in workplace.

Attendance is **FREE** for all OHS Insider members'but you do have to [register](#).

Non-members can attend by [registering for only \\$47!](#)