

Canada's Public Health Approach to the Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis

Cannabis Legalization and Regulation Branch,
Health Canada





“In taking a public health approach to the regulation of cannabis, the Task Force proposes measures that will maintain and improve the health of Canadians by minimizing the harms associated with cannabis use.

Our recommendations are shaped by our view that the decisions taken in determining the precise features of this new regulatory system should uphold and promote the health of Canadians while reducing harms.”

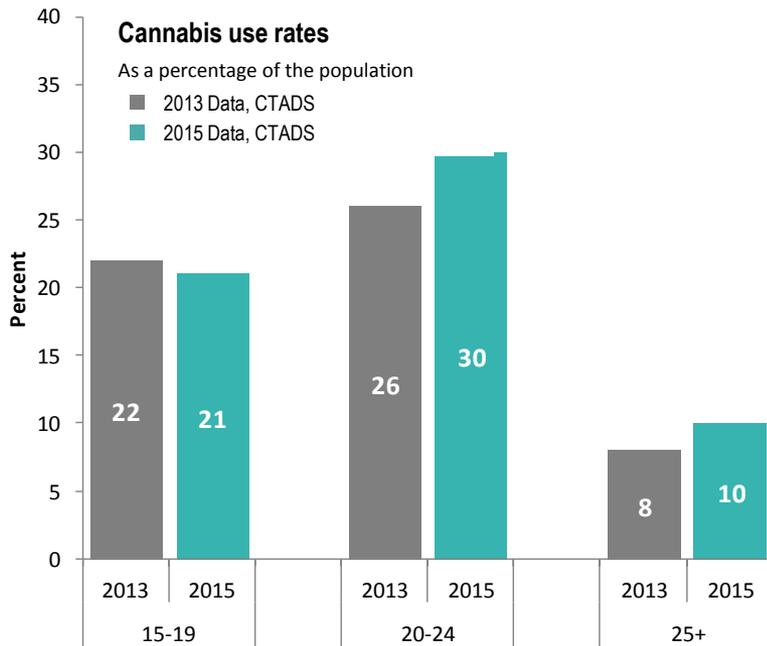
— Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation



Prevalence of Cannabis Use in Canada

Cannabis use in Canada is highest among youth and young adults ...

... and our criminal justice system is burdened with cannabis possession offences.

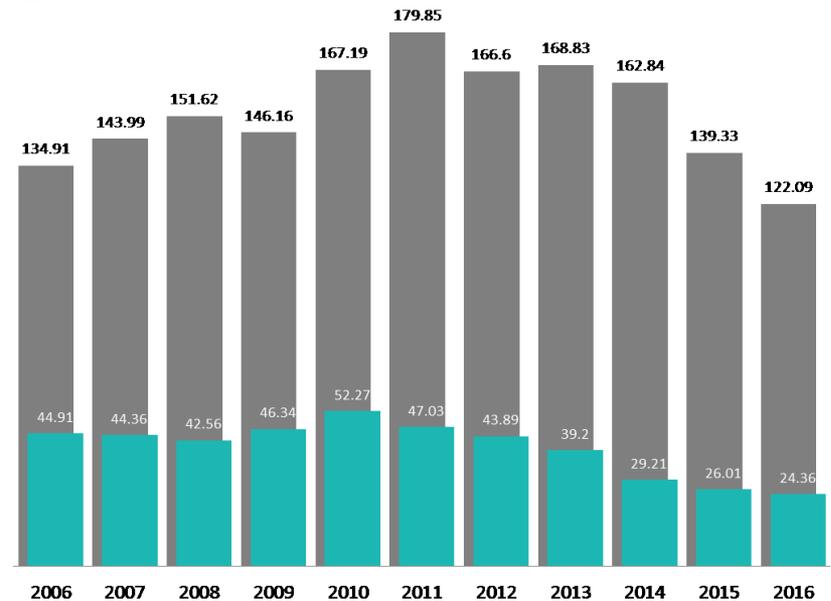


SOURCE: CANADIAN TOBACCO, ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SURVEY (CTADS)

Cannabis violations

Canadian rates per 100,000 people

- Cannabis possession
- Cannabis trafficking and production



SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA

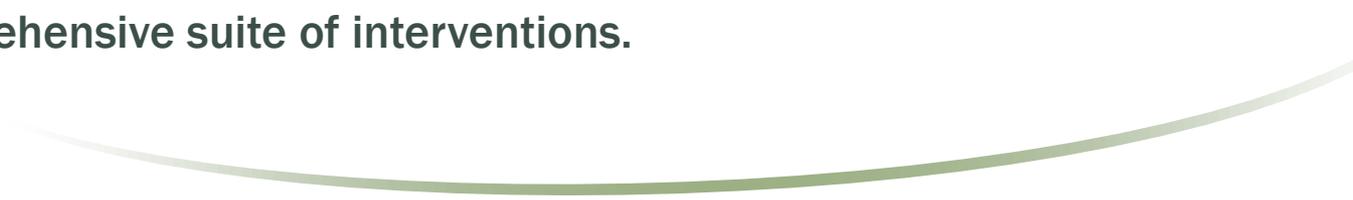


Cannabis Health Effects

While there are potential therapeutic uses, cannabis does present health risks...

- ❖ Youth are particularly at risk for cannabis-related harms since their brain continues to develop until the age of 25
- ❖ Cannabis impairs mental functions and reaction time, impacting ability to drive safely
- ❖ Cannabis use could lead to physical dependency and addiction for those who start early and use often
- ❖ Increases the risk of psychosis and schizophrenia for those with a personal or family history of mental illness

Minimizing harms and mitigating the adverse effects of cannabis use requires a comprehensive suite of interventions.



Why a Public Health Approach?

A public health approach shifts the focus from criminalization to the minimization of public health and safety harms through policy interventions that ...



Educate and raise awareness of health and safety risks



Prevent problematic use and promote healthy choices



Protect public health and safety by restricting access for youth and strictly controlling the cannabis supply chain



Monitor cannabis use patterns and industry compliance



Federal Control Framework for Cannabis





The Proposed Cannabis Act: An Overview

Taking a public health approach, Bill C-45 creates a control framework for cannabis that ...

Restricts youth from accessing cannabis

- Youth under 18 years of age are prohibited from accessing cannabis
- Protects young people and others from advertising, promotional activities and enticements to use cannabis

Controls access for adults of legal age

- Limits adult possession to 30 grams of legal cannabis
- Limits home cultivation to 4 plants per residence

Provides oversight for the operation of the legal cannabis industry

- Permits, through federal licences, the production, cultivation and processing of cannabis
- Authorizes provinces and territories to distribute and sell cannabis, subject to federal conditions

Strictly regulates the supply chain

- Provides Canadians with access to a quality-controlled supply of cannabis
- Establishes strict product safety and quality requirements (e.g., plain packaging of cannabis products)
- Safeguards the integrity of the supply chain through the creation of a Cannabis Tracking System

Establishes strong penalties to protect public safety

- Creates new cannabis-related offences with serious penalties (i.e., selling cannabis to a youth)
 - Deters illegal activities through sanctions and enforcement measures
- 



Federal Licensing Regime

The federal licensing regime would balance the need for a diverse, competitive legal industry against broader health and safety objectives ...

- ❖ **Federal government authorized to issue licences and permits for:**
 - **Cultivation:** standard cultivation, micro-cultivation, nurseries and industrial hemp
 - **Processing:** standard processing and micro-processing
 - **Federal sale license (medical):** sell tested, labelled and packaged cannabis by phone or online
 - **Other federal authorizations:** analytical testing, research authorization, and import/export permit

 - ❖ **Federal government may impose conditions on licences and permits to:**
 - Reduce the risk that organized crime will infiltrate the legal industry (e.g., security clearances)
 - Require that legal cannabis products meet high standards for quality

 - ❖ **Access to cannabis for medical purposes would be maintained; and new pathways for cannabis-based medicines would be explored**
 - Federal government would continue to licence persons and organizations to sell cannabis for medical purposes directly to registered clients and hospitals

 - ❖ **Industrial hemp would be subject to the proposed Cannabis Act**
 - Creation of a regulatory framework for industrial hemp that is risk-based
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Rules Governing Industry

National industry standards and rules to protect consumer and public health and safety...

- ❖ Stringent rules for producers who grow and manufacture cannabis
 - ❖ Restrictions on types of cannabis products that can be sold
 - ❖ Strict packaging and labelling requirements for products
 - ❖ Good production practices
 - ❖ Advertising and promotion restrictions
 - ❖ Tracking cannabis from seed to sale to prevent diversion
 - ❖ Monitor compliance and enforcement
- 



Compliance and Enforcement

The proposed Cannabis Act includes strong compliance and enforcement measures designed to uphold the integrity of the new legal framework ...

- ❖ Compliance and enforcement roles would include:
 - **Administrative compliance and enforcement**, administered by federal inspectors and officials
 - **Criminal investigation and prosecution**, within the powers and mandate of law enforcement

- ❖ Federal government will have additional authorities to enforce compliance across the supply chain
 - Conduct inspections of federally licensed entities
 - Order testing and analysis
 - Order the production of information
 - Order product recalls
 - Assess administrative monetary penalties
 - Suspend, revoke or add conditions to licenses

The Cannabis Tracking System

Bill C-45 authorizes the creation of a national Cannabis Tracking System that would:

- Prevent cannabis from being diverted to the illegal market; and,
- Prevent illegal cannabis from entering the legal market.

The Cannabis Tracking System would act as a data collection tool to:

- Inventory production and supply levels; and
 - Track products along the supply chain.
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Cannabis Education and Awareness

Clear, consistent, evidence-based information on health and safety risks through ...

- ❖ National advertising, marketing and social media campaigns on health effects of cannabis and drug impaired driving
- ❖ Targeted educational resources for priority audiences
 - Youth and young adults
 - Pregnant and breastfeeding individuals
 - Individuals with a personal or family history of mental illness
 - Culturally appropriate resources for Indigenous audiences
- ❖ Extensive use of partnerships to complement and extend reach of federal education and awareness efforts

... which will support informed choices, influence risk perceptions, and change cannabis use behaviours.

YOUR CANNABIS QUESTIONS ANSWERED
Write and post a cannabis question you like answered

Don't drive high.
Your life can change in an instant.
#dontdrivehigh

Drug-impaired driving in Canada
The facts about

Research shows that drugs can impair your ability to drive safely and increase the risk of getting into a collision. If you're the least bit impaired, don't take a chance with your life, your future, or the safety of those around you. Always drive sober.

EVERY 3 HOURS in Canada each day a drug-impaired driving offence occurs

2,786 drug-impaired driving incidents were reported in Canada in 2015

33% of parents of youth aged 13-24 don't know if their child has accepted a ride with a driver who was under the influence of cannabis

OVER 1 IN 4 cannabis users in Canada reported having operated a vehicle while under the influence of the drug

\$1000+ 1-year MINIMUM license suspension is the minimum it will cost you if you get caught driving impaired

Cannabis DOUBLES your chances for an accident

100% of impaired driving is preventable and not worth the risk

Drugs impair your ability to drive by affecting:
balance and coordination
motor skills
attention
judgment
reaction time
and decision-making skills

Canadian men are 2.5 times more likely than women to have driven a vehicle while under the influence of cannabis

What are your tips to teens about DRUGS?

CANADA.CA/HEALTH

Government of Canada

Supporting Community-Based and Indigenous Organizations

Significant investments in Indigenous and community-based awareness, education, prevention, harm reduction and treatment initiatives across Canada

- ❖ Federal government is funding community-level projects that:
 - Involve on-the-ground partners in cannabis education and awareness initiatives
 - Prevent problematic use through targeted public health interventions
 - Minimize harms of cannabis use by integrating harm reduction messages in education, awareness and health promotion activities
 - Support programs that strengthen access to substance use counselling and treatment
 - Build capacity and resiliency particularly for vulnerable populations

Health Canada Funded Projects



CANADIAN
PUBLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION
CANADIENNE DE
SANTÉ PUBLIQUE

**The Voice of Public Health
La voix de la santé publique**

The Canadian Public Health Association is helping to prepare front-line public health professionals for cannabis legalization and regulation.

The SOGC is supporting public education and awareness efforts through the development of educational videos on the risk of cannabis use for pregnant and breastfeeding individuals.



Research and Surveillance

Ongoing data collection, monitoring, surveillance and analysis to support policy development and monitoring of health and safety impacts

- ❖ Develop and implement core and expanded set of baseline data indicators
- ❖ Monitor cannabis use patterns through the Canadian Cannabis Survey
 - Nearly 10,000 respondents (majority have used cannabis)
 - Topics include how cannabis is obtained, methods of use, perceptions of use, home growing, driving after use
- ❖ Canadian Surveillance System for Poison Information
 - Collects baseline data of cannabis exposure calls
 - Monitors on an ongoing basis
- ❖ Work with federal partners to develop a research strategy on cannabis use



CANNABIS
STATS HUB

The Cannabis Stats Hub – a Statistic Canada centralized portal that collects and disseminates information on cannabis use, offences, household spending and consumer prices.



Provinces, Territories and Municipalities





Provinces, Territories and Municipalities

Core partners in the implementation of a new framework

- ❖ Building distribution and sales models that uphold public health and safety standards
 - ❖ Developing complementary legislation, regulations and by-laws to support implementation of the proposed Cannabis Act
 - ❖ Key partners in efforts to raise awareness about the risks of cannabis use
 - ❖ Investing in harm reduction, and prevention and health promotion initiatives
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Provincial, Territorial and Municipal Rules and Safeguards

Flexibility to establish more stringent controls on access

- Increase minimum age beyond 18
- Lower the possession limit
- Create additional rules for growing cannabis at home

Ability to licence and oversee the distribution and sales, subject to federal conditions

- Limits on promotion and advertising
- Fact-based health and safety information for consumers, supported by trained staff
- Retailers and distributors subject to penalties for operating outside of the legal system

Authority to enact additional rules to protect public safety

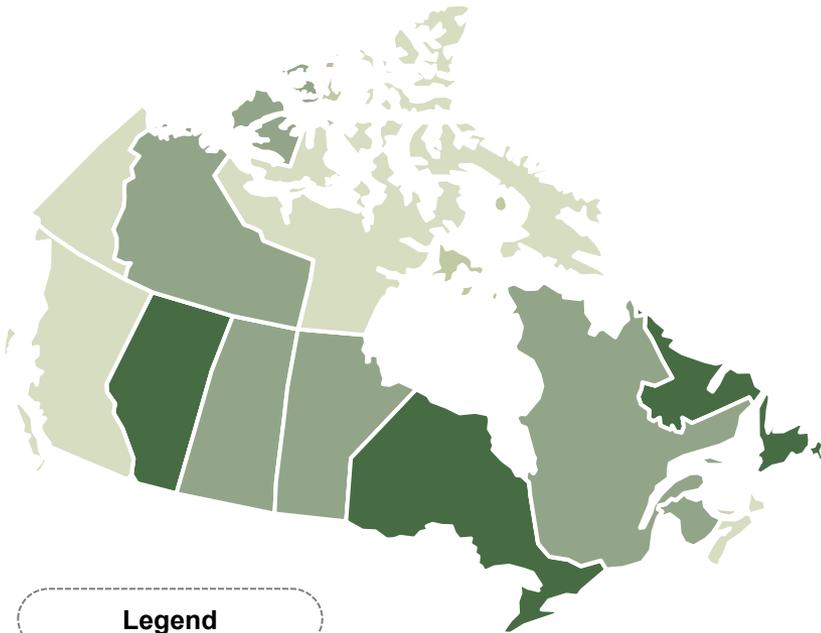
- Restrict places in which cannabis could be consumed
- Legislate/ regulate to protect public health within areas of jurisdiction

Local governments/municipalities responsible for developing rules addressing:

- Zoning, public consumption, by-law and administrative enforcement, fire prevention, health and education, communications and public engagement
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Provincial/Territorial Landscape

P/T Cannabis Policy Frameworks & Status of P/T Legislation



Legend

- Policy framework introduced (BC, YK, NU, NS, PEI)
- Legislation introduced (SK, MB, QC, NB, NWT)
- Legislation passed (AB, ON, NL)

P/T Retail Models & Minimum Ages of Purchase



Legend

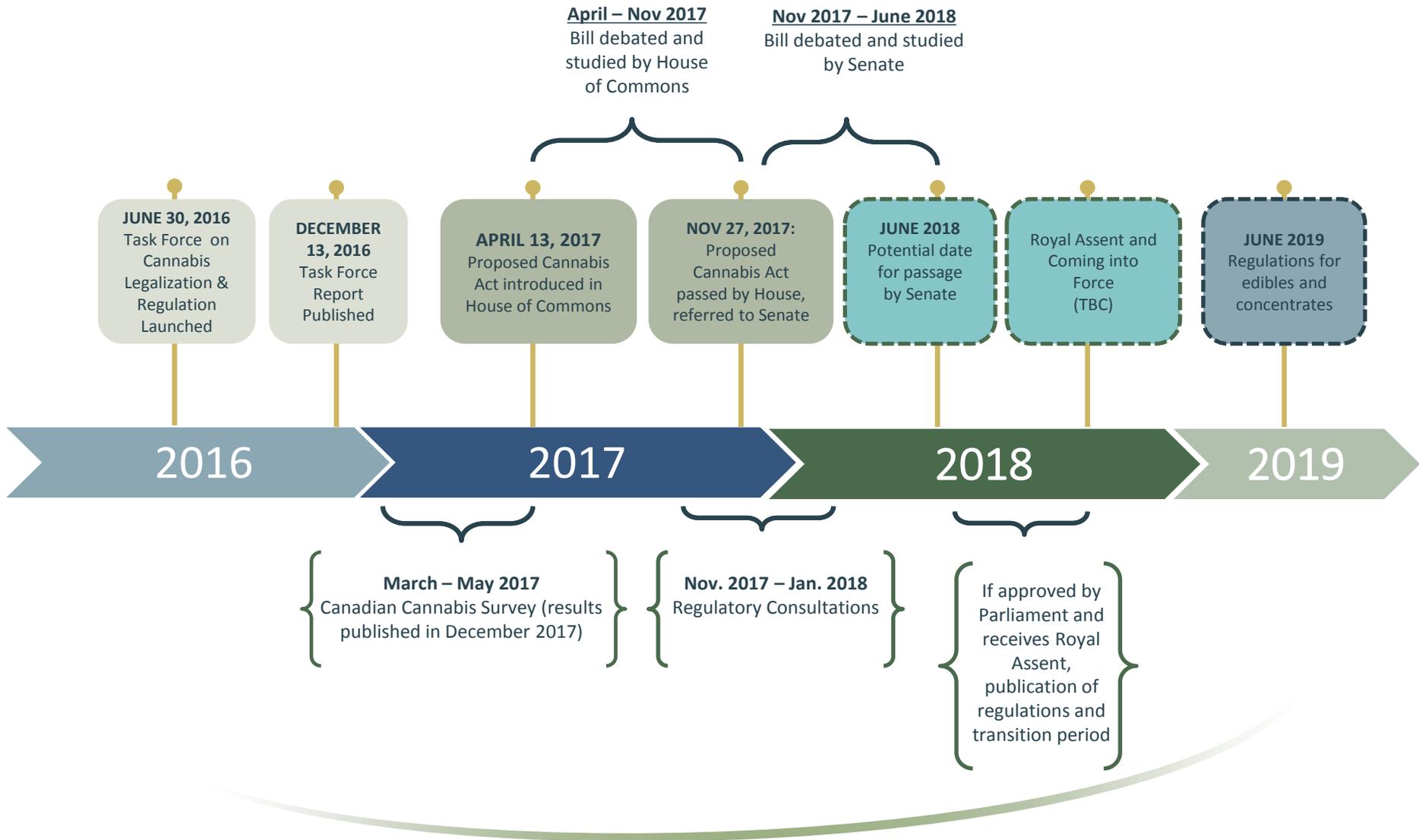
- Public** : Government-run retail model (ON, QC, NB, NS, PEI, NWT)
- Hybrid**: Mix of government-run and privately-run retail model (BC, YK, NL)
- Privately-run** retail model (AB, MB, SK, NU)
- AB, QC** have indicated a **minimum age of 18** for the purchase, possession and cultivation.
- All **other P/Ts** have indicated a **minimum age of 19** for the purchase, possession and cultivation



Toward Implementation



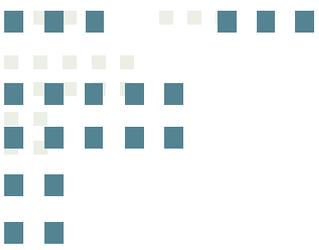
Timeline and Progress to Date





What can Canadians expect upon implementation?

- ❖ Restrictions preventing youth access
 - ❖ Careful oversight of regulated industry
 - ❖ Product safeguards and controls
 - ❖ Fact-based education campaign to promote understanding
 - ❖ Precautionary principle
 - ❖ Measure, evaluate, adjust as needed over time....
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For more information

Visit : www.canada.ca/cannabis

Enquiries: cannabis@canada.ca

