

Ontario's Plan to Regulate Legalized Cannabis

September 8, 2017 11:15 A.M.

The federal government's [Cannabis Act](#), if passed, would make it legal to produce, use and sell cannabis across Canada.

Ontario is committed to ensuring a safe and sensible transition to federal legalization. The province is planning to introduce new legislation and rules that would, if passed, ensure cannabis remains a carefully controlled substance subject to strict rules on both the lawful use and retail of the product. Revenues associated with cannabis legalization will be reinvested to ensure we meet our priorities of protecting young people, focusing on public health and community safety, promoting prevention and harm reduction and eliminating the illegal market.

Ontario's proposed changes would build on the federal framework in several key areas.

Protecting Youth and Promoting Public Health

Minimum Age

Ontario will set the minimum age to purchase recreational cannabis at **19 years old**, the same as alcohol and tobacco. This minimum age would also apply to possession and use.

The province consulted public health and law enforcement stakeholders and determined that raising the minimum age above the federal minimum will help to protect youth with an understanding that setting the age too high would risk driving young people to the illegal market.

Youth Possession

The federal government also proposed possession limits for adults and youth. Under the federal proposal, adults would be allowed to have up to 30 grams of dried legal cannabis, while people under 18 years old could have up to five grams.

To protect young people in Ontario, the province will prohibit individuals under the age of 19 from possessing or consuming recreational cannabis, which will allow police to confiscate small amounts of cannabis from young people. The province's approach to protecting youth will focus on prevention, diversion, and harm reduction without unnecessarily bringing them into contact with the justice system.

Prevention and Harm Reduction

The province will support youth, young adults and other vulnerable populations through the development of a comprehensive prevention and harm reduction approach that promotes awareness of cannabis related health harms and helps people make informed decisions about use. The approach will also include education, health and social service providers that work with, and educate, youth and young adults.

As part of this approach, Ontario is:

- Endorsing [Canada's Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines](#), and will work with health care partners to share that information and promote their uptake
- Exploring training and other supports needed to increase capacity among education, health care, youth justice and social service providers to improve prevention and harm reduction efforts

In the lead-up to federal legalization, to help ensure public awareness of this transition and the new measures that will take effect, the province will undertake a public information campaign. Ontario will also work to support the federal government's planned national public awareness campaign to promote prevention and harm reduction.

Where Cannabis Can Be Used

Under Ontario's proposed approach, it would only be legal to use recreational cannabis in private residences. People would not be allowed to consume any form of recreational cannabis in public places, workplaces or when inside a motor vehicle.

This approach is guided by the two key principles of a safe and sensible framework as well as lessons drawn from the existing laws for consuming alcohol and the province's Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

Over the coming months, Ontario will consult with municipal partners, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario and other organizations to explore the feasibility and implications of introducing designated establishments where recreational cannabis could be consumed.

Protecting Public Safety and Shutting Down the Illegal Market

Shutting Down Dispensaries

Illicit cannabis dispensaries are not and will not be legal retailers. The province will pursue a coordinated and proactive enforcement strategy with municipalities, local police services, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the federal government to help shut down these illegal operations.

This strategy will aim to reduce the illegal market, enhance public safety and eliminate the sale of unregulated and potentially unsafe cannabis products.

Enforcement

Ontario plans to convene an enforcement summit with policing partners, public health experts and other stakeholders. The summit will support a sensible transition by identifying resources to address illegal storefront sales, proposed provincial offences, enforcement gaps, coordination or collaboration opportunities and associated resource requirements to keep communities safe.

The province will continue to engage with municipal and policing partners, stakeholders and community partners, including Indigenous and First Nations partners to ensure we are giving police the tools they need to prioritize the protection of public health and safety, including road safety.

Keeping Ontario's roads safe is a critical part of the province's safe and sensible approach to the federal government's legalization of cannabis. The province will be coming forward with new measures to address drug-impaired driving in the coming weeks.

Workplace Safety

As a key part of Ontario's integrated awareness campaign and to help keep Ontario workplaces safe, the province will be developing resources to guide employers, labour groups and others as they manage workplace safety issues related to impairment at work through education and awareness initiatives.

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