

## Frequently Asked Questions on the legalization of marijuana in Vermont

### ***When does marijuana become legal in Vermont?***

The law takes effect July 1.

### ***Who will be allowed to possess and grow marijuana in Vermont?***

Adults who are at least 21 years old.

### ***What are the possession limits under the law?***

Adults over 21 will be allowed to have up to one ounce of marijuana.

### ***How will this affect the medical marijuana program?***

There's no direct impact on the more than 5,000 Vermont patients registered to use marijuana for symptom relief.

### ***Can you have a lit joint or an open bag of marijuana in a vehicle?***

No. This is what the new law says about possessing or using marijuana in a motor vehicle:

“A person shall not consume an alcoholic beverage or marijuana while operating a motor vehicle on a public highway. As used in this subsection, the prohibition on consumption of marijuana by the operator shall extend to the operator’s consumption of secondhand smoke in the vehicle as a result of another person’s consumption of marijuana.” 23 V.S.A. § 1134(a).

### **Civil penalty of not more than \$500.**

“A person operating a motor vehicle on a public highway shall not possess any open container which contains an alcoholic beverage or marijuana in the passenger area of

the motor vehicle.” 23 V.S.A. § 1134(b).

### **Civil penalty of not more than \$200.**

“A passenger in a motor vehicle shall not consume an alcoholic beverage or marijuana in the passenger area of any motor vehicle on a public highway.” 23 V.S.A. § 1134a(a).

Civil penalty of not more than \$200 for marijuana consumption.

“A passenger in a motor vehicle shall not possess any open container which contains an alcoholic beverage or marijuana in the passenger area of the motor vehicle.” Id. § 1134a(b).

### **Civil penalty of not more than \$200 for open container of marijuana.**

### ***Can I be arrested for driving while impaired by marijuana?***

Yes. Vermont law enforcement officers are trained to identify a driver who is impaired by alcohol, drugs or a combination of both. If a driver has consumed marijuana and their ability to operate a motor vehicle is diminished or impaired in the slightest degree, they can be processed while for Driving While Impaired. A conviction for Driving While Impaired can result in license suspension, a fine and incarceration. In order to have your license reinstated you would need to go through substance abuse screening and education and have mandatory financial responsibility insurance.

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### *How does marijuana use affect driving?*

Driving while impaired by any substance, including marijuana, is dangerous. Marijuana, like alcohol, negatively affects a number of skills required for safe driving. Drugs and alcohol interfere with the brain's ability to function properly. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is the main active ingredient in marijuana, affects areas of the brain that control your body's movements, balance, coordination, memory, and judgment

- Marijuana can slow your reaction time and ability to make decisions.
- Marijuana use can impair coordination, distort perception, and lead to memory loss and difficulty in problem-solving.
- The risk of impaired driving associated with marijuana in combination with alcohol appears to be greater than that for either by itself.

### *What does the law say about using tobacco or marijuana in a motor vehicle with child present?*

"A person shall not possess a lighted tobacco product or use a tobacco substitute . . . in a motor vehicle that is occupied by a child required to be properly restrained in a federally approved child passenger restraining system."

**Civil penalty of not more than \$100 and no points assessed.**

"A person shall not use marijuana . . . in a motor vehicle that is occupied by a child under 18 years of age."

**Misdemeanor Offense - Fine of not more than \$500 for a first offense.**

**Misdemeanor Offense - Fine of not more than \$750 for a second offense.**

**Misdemeanor Offense - Fine of not more than \$1,000 for third or subsequent offense.**

