



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®  
SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

*Les experts en surveillance aquatique*

Lifesaving Society Canada  
1145 Hunt Club Road, Suite 001- Ottawa, Ontario K1V 0Y3  
Telephone: 613-746-5694  
E-mail: [experts@lifesaving.ca](mailto:experts@lifesaving.ca) Web: [www.lifesaving.ca](http://www.lifesaving.ca)

## Cannabis & Lifesaving Sport Information Bulletin

As of 17 October 2018, adults who are 18 years of age or older will be able legally to possess up to 30 grams of legal cannabis (dried or equivalent in non-dried form) in public (GOC-DOJ, 2018).

The World Anti-Doping Agency Prohibited List is the international standard for identifying substances prohibited in sport based on current scientific and medical research and the input from all stakeholders (WADA, 2018). All cannabinoids (cannabis, hashish and marijuana) have been prohibited in competition since 2004 as they are considered to be (USADA, 2014):

- Performance enhancing as they can cause muscle relaxation and reduce pain during post-workout recovery; can decrease anxiety and tension, resulting in better performance under pressure; and can increase focus and risk-taking behaviors.
- A potential health risk due negative effects on respiratory, cardiac, and mental health.
- A violation of the spirit of sport since it is illegal in many countries and the use or abuse of marijuana does not exhibit the ethics and moral judgment that upholds the spirit of sport.

All athletes are subject to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program (which is fully compliant to the WADA standards) and must be aware that a positive test to a prohibitive substance can result in sanctions (GOC-DCHS, 2018). Lifesaving Sport athletes are reminded that they are not to use cannabinoids, no matter its legal status in Canada. The only way to avoid a doping violation for cannabis is through abstinence, this is no different than any other prohibited recreational drug or medication.

Athletes who are taking medical marijuana should work with their physicians to explore non-prohibited alternatives to prohibited medications. Where no alternative is available, athletes should apply for a medical exemption (refer to the Medical Exemption Wizard on the CCES website).

### References

- Government of Canada Department of Justice (GOC-DOJ) 2018. *Cannabis Legalization and Regulation*. Retrieved from: <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/cannabis/>
- World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) 2018. *2018 List of Prohibited Substances and Methods*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wada-ama.org/en/content/what-is-prohibited>
- U.S Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) 2014. *Marijuana FAQ*. Retrieved from: <https://www.usada.org/substances/marijuana-faq/>
- Government of Canada Department of Culture, History & Sport (GOC-DCHS) 2018. *Ethics in Sport*. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/ethics-sport.html>
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