

Cannabis may be legal, but it's not allowed in most Canadian workplaces

New study finds recreational cannabis impact in the workplace lower than expected

October 3, 2019, TORONTO: Nearly one year after cannabis legalization in Canada, a new study from Ipsos, commissioned by ADP Canada, reveals most Canadian workplaces don't allow recreational cannabis before, during and after work. Most working Canadians (86%) say their employer does not permit recreational cannabis use and only a fraction (8%) say cannabis use is allowed during the workday. These findings are in line with a similar study conducted by ADP in 2018, where 6 per cent of Canadians thought they would be allowed to use cannabis during work hours or before coming to work.

The study found that recreational cannabis had a smaller-than-expected impact on workplace performance. Most Canadians believe recreational cannabis has had no impact at work in terms of health and safety incidents (75%), productivity (74%) absenteeism (71%) or quality of work (70%). This is in stark contrast to opinions held prior to legalization in 2018, when nearly half of working Canadians expected productivity (46%) and quality of work (43%) to decline, and health and safety incidents (55%) and absenteeism (40%) to increase.

Within the small number of working Canadians (8%) who say their employer allows the use of recreational cannabis, 63 per cent are consuming it before work, 47 per cent are consuming during work hours and 72 per cent are consuming after work (72%). However, when looking at Canada's working population at large, the survey finds that only a fraction of Canadians consume recreational cannabis before work (5%), during work hours (4%) and after work with colleagues (6%).

"There was a lot of uncertainty and hype leading up to cannabis legalization last year, but so far, cannabis has not had a noticeable impact on the workplace or on workplace performance," said Hendrik Steenkamp, Director, HR Advisory, ADP Canada. "Although only a fraction of Canadian workplaces allow cannabis during the workday, it's important for every organization to develop proper workplace guidelines and policies, as well as provide training to identify and manage impairment."

There remains a disconnect between managers and non-managers on both acceptance and consumption of recreational cannabis during the workday. Though 80 per cent of Canadians say they are either fully or somewhat aware of expectations surrounding legal recreational cannabis use, managers (86%) are more likely to fully understand their organization's policies than non-managers (74%). Respondents in Atlantic Canada were most likely to be aware (72%) of their organization's expectations and Quebecers were the least likely to be aware (56%). Additionally, managers are more likely to believe that cannabis is accepted in the workplace (13% compared to 3% of non-managers).

Canadian attitudes toward recreational cannabis have not changed significantly since legalization - nearly half of participants (46%) claim their perception of cannabis has not changed at all and 22 per cent say their perception of cannabis is more positive. Positive perceptions on cannabis are highest in Ontario (27%) and Atlantic Canada (22%).

With the legalization of recreational cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals in Canada occurring on October 17, it is likely that many workplaces will be reviewing and revising their policies

regarding cannabis use. However, over half of Canadians (55%) say they do not believe this impending legalization will change their employer's expectations around impairment. Managers (37%) are more likely than non-managers (23%) to expect a change in their employer's expectations. Regionally, this opinion is most prevalent in Alberta (35%), Ontario (33%), and British Columbia, and least held in the Prairies (17%) or Atlantic Canada (20%).

Survey Methodology

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between August 30 and September 18, 2019 on behalf of ADP. For this survey, a sample of 1,160 working Canadians aged 18 and over were interviewed. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the population of working Canadians according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all working Canadian adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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