



COLORADO

Department of
Transportation

Decriminalization of Marijuana and its Impact on Traffic Safety
Colorado Perspective
Commercial Vehicle Safety & CDL Compliance

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Highway Safety Manager since 2004

Colorado Department of Transportation
(CDOT)

Highway Safety Office (HSO)

Impaired Driving

Drug Recognition Expert Training

Standard Field Sobriety Testing

Marijuana Policy Representation:

Governor's Office Working Group

Education Oversight Committee

Law Enforcement

Key Stake Holders

Social Consumption

Data



“Selling” the HSO Position of Ending Marijuana Prohibition

- Advocate
- Candor
- Realist



Marijuana Traffic Safety Impact



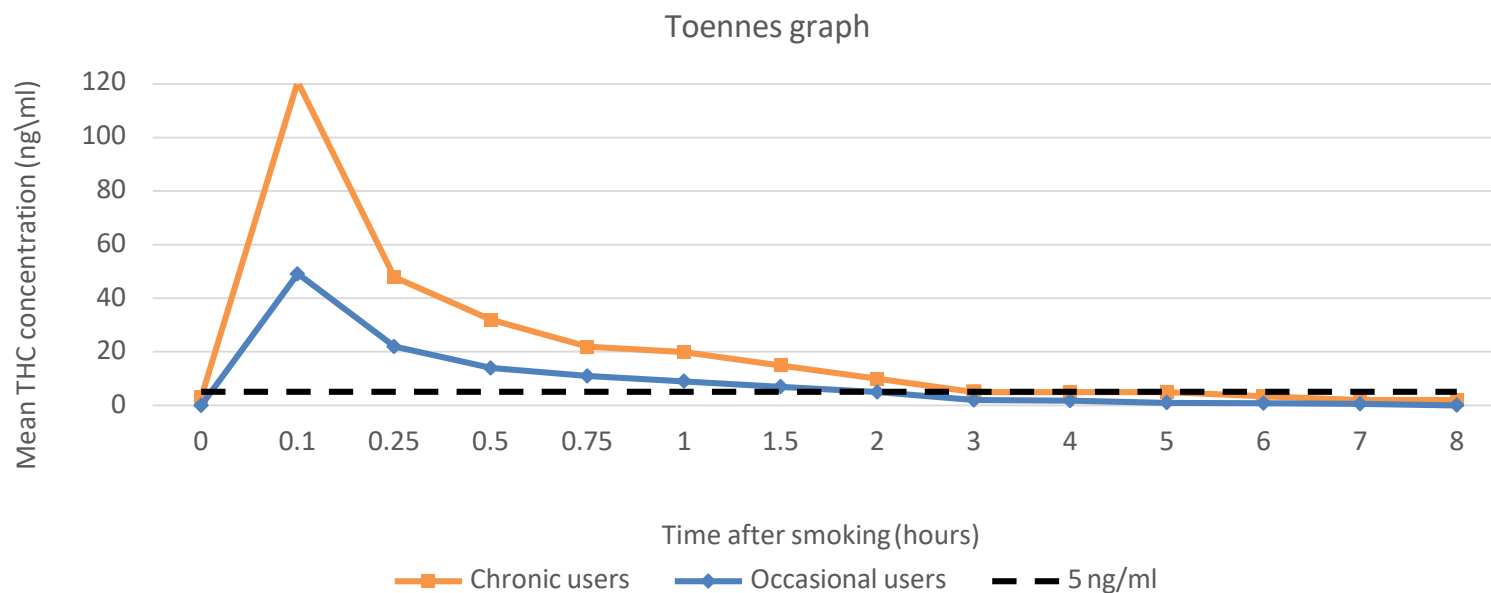
- Marijuana's Effects on the consumer:
- Redding of the Conjunctiva
- Odor
- Body/Eyelid Tremors
- Increased Appetite
- Impaired Perception of Time and Distance
- Disorientation
- Relaxed Inhibition (Speed)
- Divided Attention Difficulty (Roadsides0

Change in Colorado DUI Law since Legalization

- Five nanograms or more of delta 9 tetrahydrocannabinol per milliliter in the whole blood = permissible inference that the defendant was under the influence of one or more drugs.
- Arrestees can choose to refuse, breath (alcohol only) or blood.
- Law Enforcement (LE) may often choose breath if alcohol is dominant drug.
- LE can select test (blood) if drug impairment articulable.



Challenge of Delta-9 THC Over Time

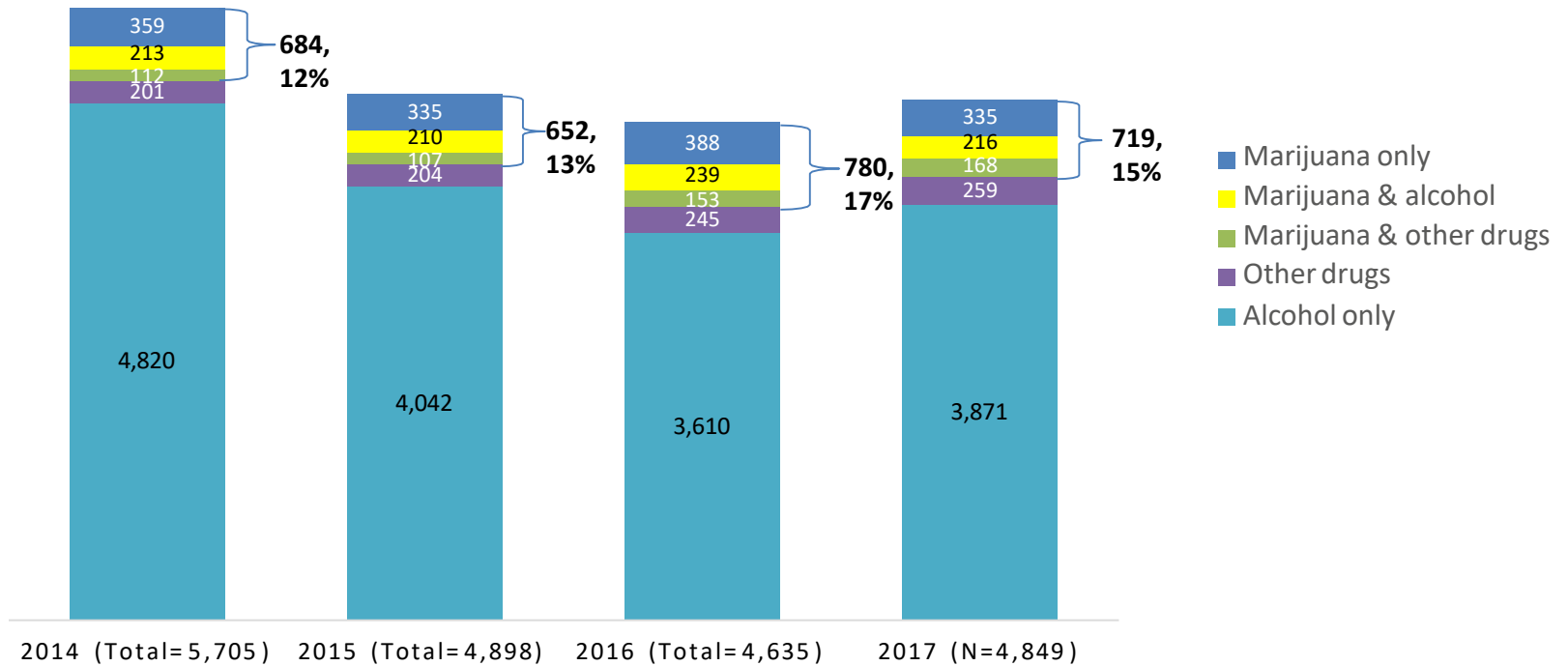


Source: Adapted from Toennes, S., Ramaekers, J., Theunissen, E., Moeller, M., & Kauert, G. (2008). Comparison of cannabinoid pharmacokinetic properties in occasional and heavy users smoking a marijuana or placebo joint. *Journal of Analytical Toxicology*, 32, 470-477.





DUI Citations Colorado State Patrol

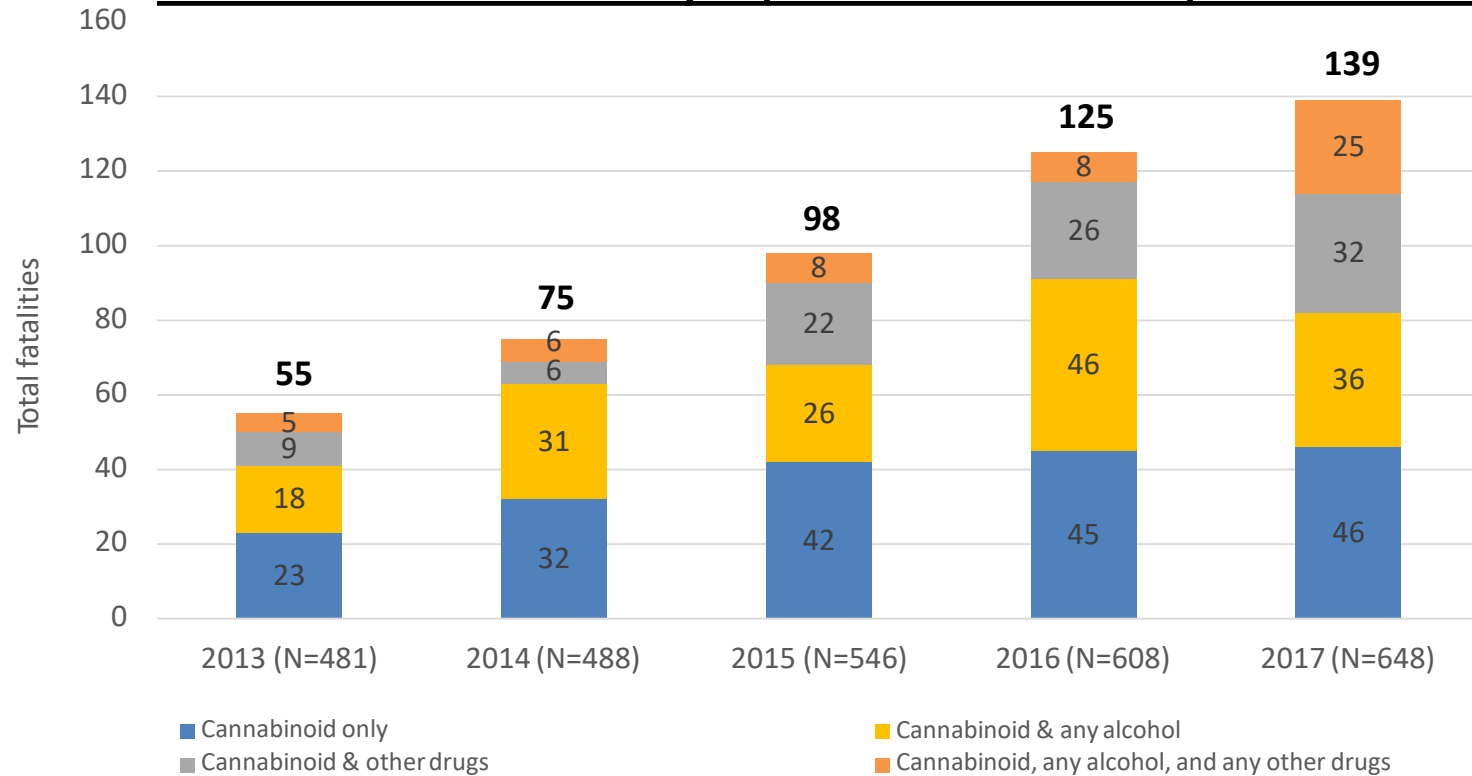


Source: Colorado State Patrol (2017).

Note: Drug impairment determination is based on trooper's informed perception and not toxicology results



Marijuana-involved Fatalities on Colorado Roadways (Cannabinoids)

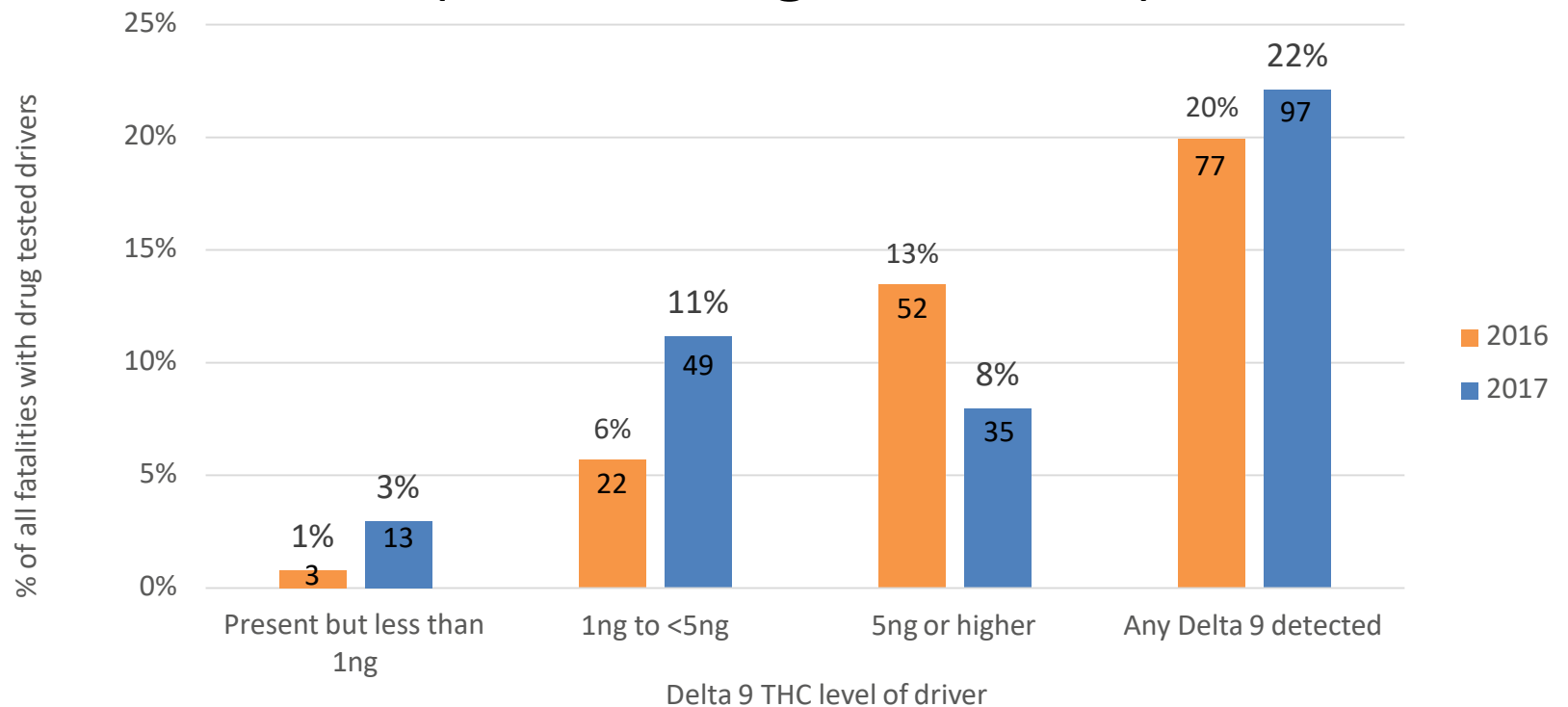


Source: Colorado Department of Transportation, Data Intelligence Group, Toxicology Data (2018).

Note: a) Numbers are based on toxicology results where at least one driver was tested for drugs after a crash.

b) The presence of a cannabinoid does not necessarily indicate recent use of marijuana or impairment.

Cannabis-involved Fatalities on Colorado Roadways (Delta 9 5 ng and above)



Source: Colorado Department of Transportation, Data Intelligence Group, Toxicology Data (2018).

Note: Percents are based on tested drivers, which are about 46% of all drivers involved in fatal crashes. Colorado has established a "permissible inference of impairment at 5 ng/mL Delta-9 THC.



Driving Culture and Legalization



The more often People consumed cannabis:

- The less dangerous they considered driving impaired to be.
- The more they used the safer they were.
- Consumption and tolerance are biggest influencers. Gut feelings.
- Fifty percent users surveyed considered driving high to be safe.
- Not persuaded by government messaging that discourages driving under the influence.
- Respondents who consume cannabis less often or who do not use cannabis were more likely to say that driving high was unsafe.

Best Practices/Lessons Learned



- Find the/a baseline
- Identify barriers (Peace Officer Training, Definitions of Impairment, Public Attitudes, Arrestee Options)
- Take advantage of environment (\$) to improve data
- Find ways to reach your audience (cannabis consuming roadway users/all other roadway users)
- Have a position, theory, sound bite(s) for results

Colorado's HSO Plans to Address Challenge

- Advocate for a review of Standard Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) thorough testing on cannabis impaired subjects?
- Investigate the Implementation of Technology to Arrest Decision
- Utilize Marijuana Cash Tax Fund (MCTF) for enforcement
- Partner with MJ Industry Leaders



Colorado's HSO Plans to Address the Cultural Change(s) in Roadway Users

- For decades it was the social norm to drive impaired. It took tougher laws, strict enforcement and a social movement by groups like MADD to change the narrative and create a stigma against impaired driving . Such efforts dramatically reduced drunk driving fatalities.
- As the first to end prohibition of recreational marijuana, we have a unique opportunity to lead and change or even set the social norm.
- Our goal is to partner with our public, industry, law enforcement, non profit health and others to set to social norm in Colorado and perhaps a leading path for the country.



For Information on CDOT Impaired Driving Programs

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