

| Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL | |
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| Section: G. Paramedic Services | Effective Date: April 30, 2019 |
| Topic: 3. Operations Directives | Replaces: October 09, 2018 |
| Subject: 6 Use of Cannabis by Paramedics | |
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PURPOSE

To ensure Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB, Paramedics Services personnel are fully aware of the framework for responsible use of cannabis in concert with the employer’s expectations surrounding the promotion of workplace health and safety, operational readiness, and compliance with the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Code of Conduct. Additionally, this policy will identify measures for addressing misuse of cannabis.

APPLICATION

Paramedics, Paramedic Superintendents, Senior Managers, Administrative Staff.

RISK STATEMENT

The role of Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Paramedics includes a varied number of activities that directly impact on patients, the public and both internal and external personnel. As cannabis is a substance that is known to cause impairment, consumption of this substance may reasonably be considered to negatively impact on one’s professional responsibility, and as such is prohibited under this policy.

PROCEDURE

Allowable Use, Possession, and Prohibition

While cannabis consumption and possession by Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB personnel is set out in applicable Legislation, it is hereby directed that no personnel employed by Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB shall possess, or consume cannabis or cannabis products while ‘on-duty’, ‘on-call’, engaged in any training or other work assignment, or within restricted timelines in advance of any above specified work assignment. For the purposes of this policy, cannabis consumption for the period 24 hours in advance of any of the above duty assignments will be considered prohibited. Consumption of cannabis includes but is not limited to inhalation and ingestion.

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Impact of Cannabis Consumption

Cannabis consumption can cause significant impairment in the ability to perform complex tasks in casual users up to 24 hours after the consumption. As such, the restricted consumption timelines are set out in policy to address the potential for risk to operational readiness, cognition, mood and memory, judgement and motor skills based upon:

- the THC content/preparation;
- general physical condition of the consumer;
- route of consumption
- individual metabolism;

Concurrent use of alcohol or other medications can magnify, alter or prolong the effects of cannabis. Cannabis is fat-soluble and therefore moves from the bloodstream into the tissues more rapidly, and is eliminated from the body more slowly, than many other intoxicating substances. As such, traces of cannabis may remain in the human body for up to 28 days or more following consumption. Measured body fluid cannabis levels may not accurately correspond to the degree of impairment caused by cannabis, and subacute or persistent cannabis impairment is considered an important occupational and safety risk.

Incidental Exposure to Cannabis

The innocent exposure to secondhand cannabis smoke/vapour in an environment absent adequate ventilation has been found to result in detectable levels of THC in both urine and blood (Herrmann, Cone, Mitchell & Bigelow, 2015). McKee, McClure, Fyfe & Stanwick (2018) report a need for further research to help protect the public from exposure to secondhand cannabis smoke or vapour. Resulting impairment resulting from innocent exposure to cannabis shall not be considered a mitigating factor in management of this policy.

Medical Consumption of Cannabis

The prescription of cannabis for the medical purposes from a valid medical practitioner is not intended to impact on this provision of this policy, however and Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Paramedic who has been prescribed cannabis or any mind-altering or impairment-causing drug for medical purposes must communicate such consumption with the Deputy Chief's office in order to allow consideration of an accommodation that ensures mitigation of issues as set out in the Risk Statement in this policy.

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Management of Policy Violation

As with any policy violation, the misuse of cannabis will be addressed through both remedial, and/or disciplinary action. In the event of disciplinary action, such discipline will be progressive up and to including dismissal.

Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Paramedics are required to report to their Paramedic Superintendent any incident of suspected impairment of personnel, including the use or misuse of cannabis.

The Paramedic Superintendent will must conduct an initial evaluation of the report, and where deemed necessary, remove the subject Paramedic from deployment, and contact the Deputy Chief for further direction.

The Deputy Chief will coordinate further investigation with Human Resources and the Chief's Office. Where any cannabis consumption is commensurate with operation of a motor vehicle, the incident will be forwarded to the jurisdictional Police Service responsible.

REFERENCE

Code of Conduct
MSDSB Policy C.4.06
Canadian Department of National Defence Policy 9004-1
Cannabis Act
Ontario Human Rights Code
Ministry of Transportation - Road Safety Measures under the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, 2015 and the Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017