

# THE CANNABIS CONVERSATION



## 2018 RESEARCH SUMMARY

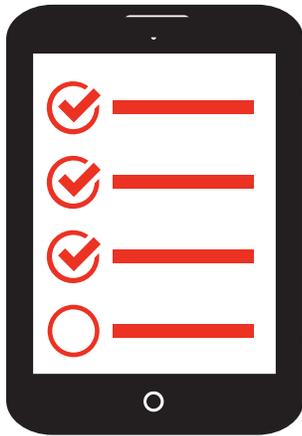


**COLORADO**  
Department of  
Transportation

Disclaimer: Rather than recruit a random sample of Coloradans, this study prioritized recruiting and learning from people in Colorado who use cannabis.

Colorado continues to see cannabis-involved traffic incidents that result in serious consequences. Ongoing education and outreach campaigns in recent years have successfully raised awareness for this issue, but **studies show behavior is not changing and motorists continue to drive after consuming cannabis.**

**In 2018, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) launched *The Cannabis Conversation*,** a statewide campaign to learn about Coloradans' opinions about driving under the influence of cannabis. CDOT conducted two studies as part of this campaign, ultimately engaging more than 15,000 Coloradans from across the state.



**We asked Coloradans about cannabis use, norms and beliefs, and driving under the influence of cannabis.**

#### ONLINE SURVEY

- February-August 2018
- Over 15,000 respondents

#### ONLINE FOCUS GROUP

- Online qualitative study
- March-April 2018
- 64 cannabis users



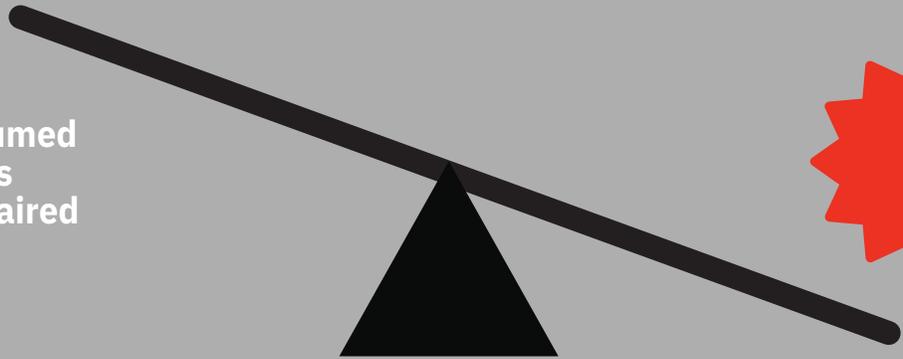
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“I was able to contribute a little bit to an issue that is pretty important to our state ... I think it's great that cannabis users were involved ... I felt like my opinion was valued.”

\*Photos are not of actual research participants

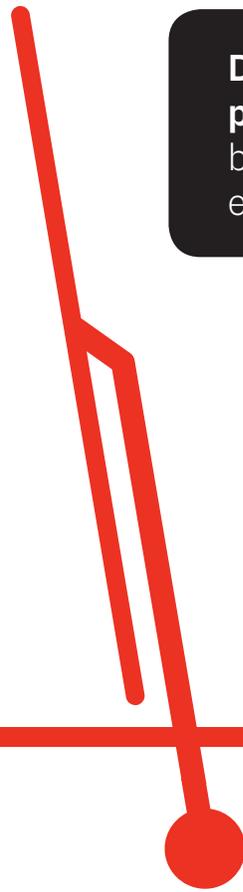
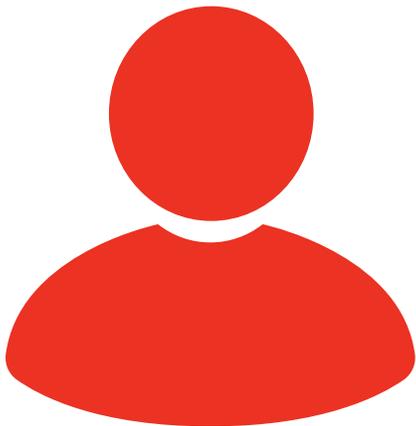


The **more often** people **consumed** cannabis, **the less dangerous** they consider cannabis-impaired driving to be.



**Passengers** who rode with cannabis-impaired drivers reported **feeling worried, angry or annoyed.**

**Drivers** under the influence often **expect passengers who feel unsafe to intervene,** but passengers generally do not speak up even when they are uncomfortable.



**Most daily users drove under the influence of cannabis. People who consume less often typically waited at least two hours after consuming.**



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“Daily users can smoke and drive perfectly fine because of tolerance.”

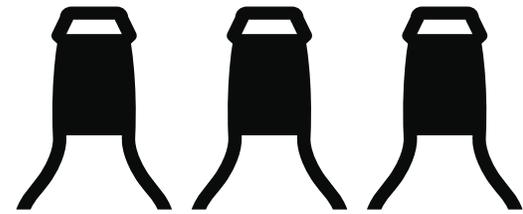
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Respondents who use cannabis said the **type of consumption (smoke, vape, edibles)** and tolerance affected the ability to safely drive under the influence.



Many users consider **alcohol to be the main determinant of impaired driving, not cannabis.** Even where someone consumed both, users consider alcohol to be the cause of car crashes.



Some respondents, **typically users, consider other behaviors (e.g., drunk driving, cell phone use) higher priority** than driving under the influence of cannabis.

People **consider drinking and driving to be worse than driving under the influence of cannabis.**

**Financial consequences, legal consequences and safety concerns** were all deterrents ... but participants **questioned how realistic** these outcomes were.

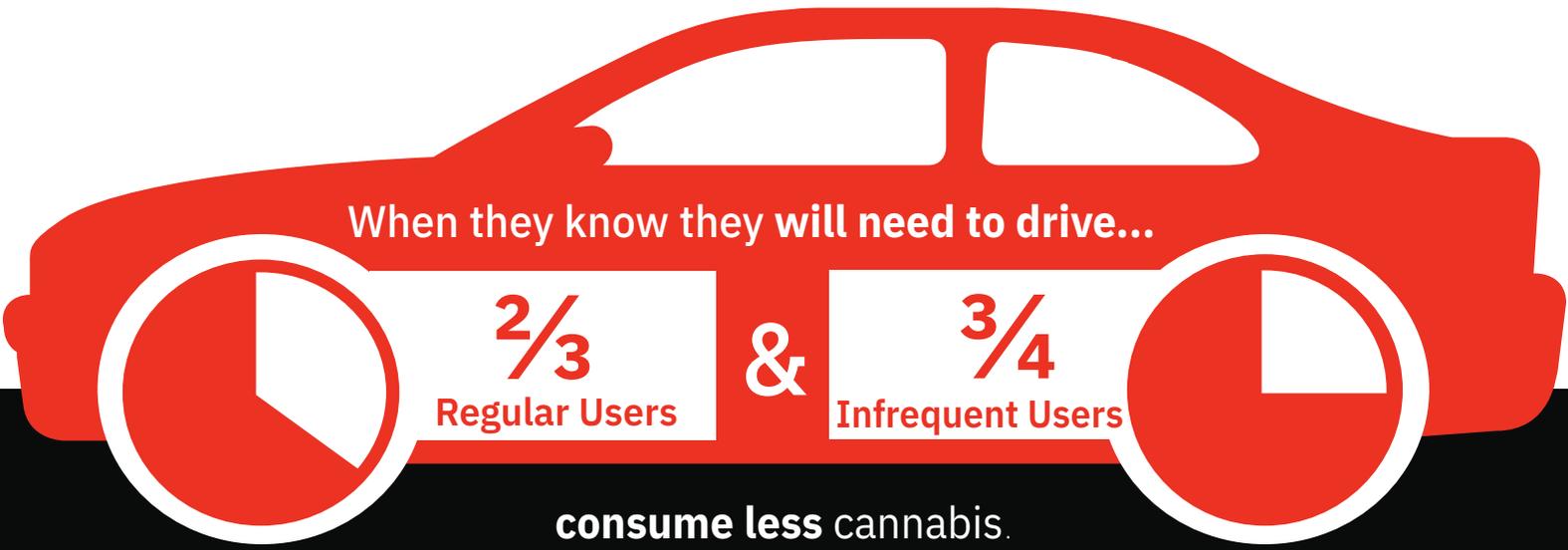


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“I think cannabis tolerance plays a huge factor in what ‘under the influence’ might be. I am a heavy user ... if an inexperienced user consumed a normal amount for me they would probably be unsafe to drive.”

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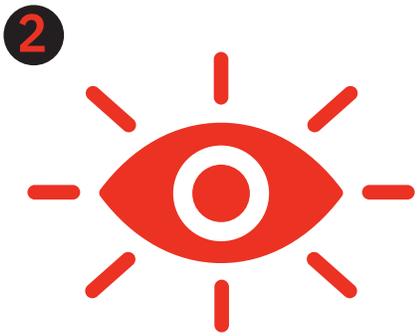


Many users have normalized driving high, but most still consider whether they are impaired before driving.

Their top considerations are:



1 Travel Conditions



2 Feeling Alert Enough



3 How Recently They Consumed Cannabis



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“I would like to see the research include motor skills as well as cognitive processes in determining one’s ability ... I also would like to see data on THC levels in the body for every day consuming.”

\*Photos are not of actual research participants

**Most users are critical of laws, policies and enforcement** about driving under the influence of cannabis.



**Budtenders and dispensaries are great messengers.**

**Passengers are a possible messenger if they are empowered to speak up.**



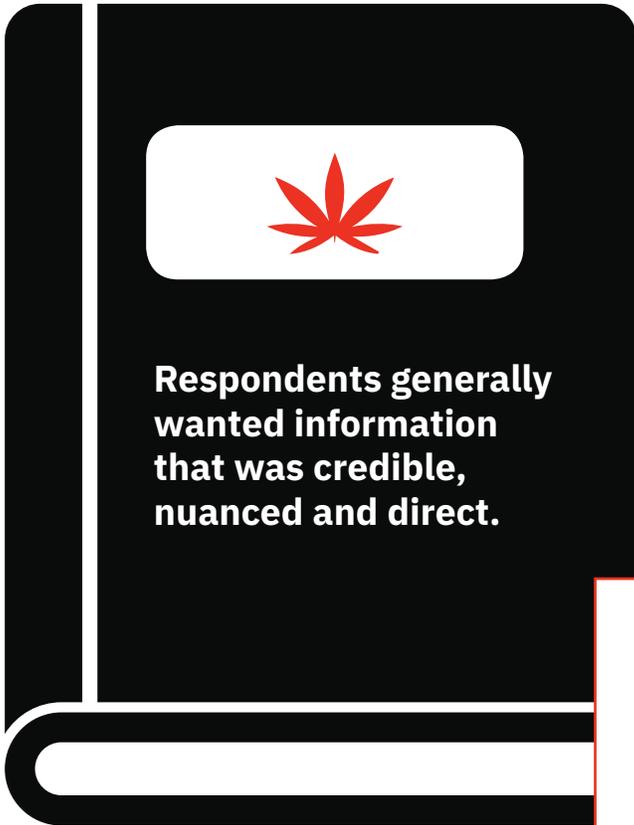
**Users were more skeptical than non-users about legal consequences and the ability of police to enforce DUI laws** regarding cannabis.

Cannabis supporters **see government policies as out-of-touch.**



They suggested research on **detection methods** and guidelines for **self-assessment of impairment, dosage-based legal limits, and how long to wait** before driving.

Respondents wanted **independent, empirical research** on drugged driving (e.g. large-scale institutional studies, preferably experiments).



**Respondents generally wanted information that was credible, nuanced and direct.**

“I have not seen data that cannabis by itself leads to fatal traffic accidents.”



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