



Alcohol & Drug FAQ's

When you come to the food bank, as a paid worker or a volunteer, you must be fit for work. Your ability to work safely and productively must not be impaired by alcohol, drugs (including cannabis), prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, or any other impairing substance. With the legalization of recreational cannabis use, it is the Food Banks' requirement that you must not be impaired while working as a paid employee or volunteer, regardless of your role or the task you are assigned to.

Q. Is cannabis the same as alcohol? Why is consuming alcohol allowed in some circumstances but not cannabis?

A. For most purposes, recreational cannabis is treated the same as alcohol, but there are important distinctions between them. For example, unlike alcohol, the scientific community hasn't established widely accepted standards or technology to definitively determine a person's level of impairment when using cannabis. This makes it more difficult to measure or predict impairment and its effects. This is just one of the reasons to treat cannabis differently than alcohol in some circumstances.

Q. What is the policy on expensing cannabis?

A. Cannabis is not a permissible expense.

Q. Can I smoke cannabis on my smoke break at work or before my workday begins?

A. No. You must not report to work or be impaired at work, whether you are a paid employee or volunteer.

Q. I consume brownies containing cannabis in the evening and have a shift in the morning. Will I be fit to perform work?

A. Cannabis is different from alcohol. It stays in your body for a longer period of time after you have consumed it. There are different impairing effects based on how you consume cannabis. Typically, if you consume cannabis orally, the impairing effect lasts longer than inhalation. You may feel no effects, but the level of cannabis in your system could still result in a positive test and you may still be impaired. If you report to work in the morning and are involved in a situation that warrants alcohol and drug testing, you may test positive, and face the consequences of being in violation of any Alcohol and Drug Policies.

Q. I have a prescription for medical cannabis. Can I use it during work hours? Do I need to disclose it?

A. The use of medical cannabis during or outside working hours may affect your ability to work safely and productively. If you've been prescribed medical cannabis by a licensed physician, you must verify with that person whether its use has the potential to impair you at work. If impairment is possible, you must advise your manager that you may require work modification due to medication.

Q. Do I have to inform my manager if I have a prescription for medical cannabis?

A. You need to advise your manager that you may require work modification or a medical accommodation due to medication you're taking medication (including medical cannabis) that has the potential to impair you. Failure to report your medical cannabis prescription (or any prescription you are taking that has the potential to impair you) may result in discipline or dismissal.

Q. Am I at risk of testing positive for cannabis during the work week if I use it on the weekend before?

A. Yes. Cannabis is fat soluble. This means that it metabolizes differently in every person's body. More importantly, the THC (which is the impairing component of the drug more formally known as "Tetrahydrocannabinol") can become reactivated when a person works out, or does any kind of physical activity. Employees or volunteers who participate in physical labour and use cannabis products are more at risk of becoming impaired at work and testing positive for cannabis, even days after consuming the drug.

Q. Can I consume cannabis products (including edibles, teas, oils, creams and so on) at Food Bank Events?

A. The consumption or use of cannabis products is not permitted at Food Bank events.

Q. I'm attending an Event hosted by a donor and as part of their entertainment they've offered cannabis products. Can I partake?

A. While representing a Food Bank you are expected to decline the offer. Cannabis use while representing your organization is not allowed.

Q. How will cannabis affect my health?

A. Cannabis, like tobacco and alcohol, has known health risks (see the [Canadian government publication on cannabis impacts on health](#)).

Q. Will medical cannabis be covered by our benefits plan?

A. Generally under extended health care plans, prescription drugs are covered when prescribed by a doctor or dentist and obtained from a pharmacist. Prescription drugs covered under the plan must have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) in order to be eligible. Since medical cannabis does not currently have a DIN, it is not currently covered under most extended health care plans.

Q. Do I need to prevent other workers from working if the workers are impaired. Why?

A. Under the *Worker's Compensation Act*, employers, supervisors and employees have an obligation to contribute to a safe workplace. Employees are expected to advise their manager or crew /work leader, if another employee is in breach of the Policy. Of primary concern is to ensure a safe work place. If you are aware of someone who may be impaired while at work for any reason including from the use or after effects of using alcohol or drugs you must notify a manager immediately.

Q. Can passive inhalation of cannabis smoke lead to a positive test even if I don't smoke cannabis?

A. No. People may claim that inadvertent exposure to cannabis smoke is the reason for their positive test result. Passive inhalation can result in detectable levels of THC metabolites (the primary pharmacological component of cannabis) in urine. However, clinical studies have found it's highly unlikely that a non-smoking individual could inhale sufficient smoke by passive inhalation to result in a high enough drug concentration to exceed the cut-off levels.

Q. What should I do if I think another employee or volunteer has a problem with alcohol and/or drugs?

A. If you think that there's a safety risk or that the employee is impaired at work, you must immediately notify your manager. If there's no immediate safety risk and you feel comfortable doing so, encourage the individual to seek help. Early intervention is important. By helping someone hide a problem, you may enable behaviour that may have negative safety and/or other workplace impacts, and may have long term health impacts for the individual.