

Arlington, VA — Concerned about truck drivers sharing the roads with passenger vehicle drivers who are under the influence of marijuana in states where recreational and medicinal use is legal, the American Transportation Research Institute has released a report detailing the most promising methods to identify and deter impaired driving.

Published March 13, [Marijuana Legalization and Impaired Driving: Solutions for Protecting Our Roadways](#) also addresses safety issues related to marijuana-impaired driving, a top study priority of ATRI's Research Advisory Committee.

Among the concerns identified by ATRI, the research arm of the American Trucking Associations, is a lack of field tests for active marijuana impairment or intoxication (e.g., a breathalyzer test). Current testing involves blood and urine samples that can identify past marijuana use, but these are inadequate for identifying drivers operating under the influence because of the body's mechanisms for processing THC, the drug's intoxicant agent.

"It is extremely concerning to motor carriers and our drivers that recreational marijuana is legal in so many states," Mike Card, president of the trucking company Combine Transport Inc., said in an ATRI press release, "yet as the ATRI report documents, a valid and widely accepted breathalyzer-type test is not available to law enforcement."

The report recommends training law enforcement officers to identify and collect evidence of impaired driving, as well as developing drug recognition experts, who can incorporate additional physiological roadside tests to enhance marijuana-impairment detection.

"A key tool for combating drugged drivers is deploying additional drug recognition experts," Colorado State Patrol Deputy Chief Mark Savage said in the release. "A DRE can bring critical evidence to prosecutors that other tests simply cannot measure."

ATRI's other recommendations:

- Educate judges and prosecutors on how marijuana impairs drivers and how to understand

expert witness testimony.

- Increase data collection on the frequency and impacts of marijuana-impaired driving.
- Inform the public on the dangers and legal consequences of impaired driving via safety campaigns.

To help fund these initiatives, ATRI suggests using tax revenue from recreational marijuana sales, which is legal in 10 states, plus the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico. Medicinal marijuana is legal in 33 states.

“ATRI’s study clearly defines a role for federal and state leaders to support law enforcement and others in keeping the roadways safe from those who choose to drive high,” Card said in the release.

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