

# HOW LEGALIZED MARIJUANA COULD IMPACT WORKPLACE SAFETY

*Legalized marijuana is coming to Canada in 2018. Bill C-45, the government's proposed cannabis law, and Bill C-46, a companion piece of legislation aimed at preventing impaired driving, fail to recognize the impact that marijuana legalization could have on workplaces. This gap in the legislation could have safety implications that cannot be ignored.*

## Why Canada's railways are concerned

**Drug impairment poses a danger to everyone in the workplace.** This is particularly the case in safety-sensitive industries, such as rail, where impairment can increase the risks of serious injury and death.<sup>1</sup>

**Cannabis use could increase following legalization.** Evidence from jurisdictions where marijuana has been legalized demonstrates increased consumption following legalization.<sup>2</sup>

**Marijuana can impair the critical abilities necessary for working safely.** These skills – such as quick reaction times, the ability to respond to unexpected events, and sound decision making – are those needed for the safe operation of locomotives and equipment in rail operating environments.<sup>3</sup>

## What Canada should do before marijuana is legalized

**ESTABLISH** maximum permissible evidence-based levels of marijuana impairment, especially for those working in transportation safety positions.

**DEVELOP** an acceptable standard for instruments used to measure cannabis impairment, similar to a breathalyzer.

**INTRODUCE** regulatory tools allowing those in safety-sensitive industries to enforce zero-tolerance impairment policies when it comes to marijuana.

**Safety is a top priority for Canada's railways. Before recreational marijuana becomes legal, governments should be on board with policies to ensure workplaces remain safe.**

1 The Final Report of the Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation. November 2016. Health Canada.

2 The Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado: The Impact. October 2017. Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area.

3 Information for Health Care Professionals: Cannabis (marihuana, marijuana) and the cannabinoids. February 2013. Health Canada.