



FACTUM

Some Canadian Drivers are Driving While Believing They Are Impaired from Alcohol, Cannabis or an Illicit Drug, Medication (Prescribed or Not) or Other Substance Used for Recreational Purposes or to Get High

These Behaviours More Pronounced Among Men 18 to 34

Toronto, ON, March 21, 2022 – A recent poll conducted by Ipsos on behalf of MADD Canada shows that some Canadian drivers aged 18-70 with a valid driver's licence (referred to as Canadian drivers hereafter) are driving while believing they are impaired from alcohol, cannabis, or an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance they are using for recreational purposes or to get high, and that young men are even more likely to be engaging in these behaviours.

Canadian Drivers Are Driving While Believing They Are Impaired And With Passengers Onboard

Among the 67% of Canadian drivers who used alcohol in the past 30 days, fewer than one in ten (6%) have driven believing they are impaired from alcohol at least once in the last 6 months, with one-third (35%) driving with passengers onboard. Among the 27% of drivers who used cannabis in the past 30 days, fewer than one in ten (7%) have driven believing they are impaired from cannabis at least once in the last 6 months, with a majority of these (56%) driving with passengers. Among the 16% of drivers who used an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high (top drugs mentioned: stimulant, depressant, hallucinogen, opioid, etc.) in the past 30 days, fewer than one in ten (7%), have driven while believing they are impaired from any of these substances at least once in the last 6 months, with a vast majority of these (83%) driving with passengers onboard.

Among drivers who have driven while believing they are impaired from alcohol with passengers onboard, more than four in ten (45%) have driven with at least one passenger below 18 years of age and an almost unanimous figure (96%) have driven with at least one passenger 18 years or older. Among the small number who have driven while believing they are impaired from cannabis with passengers onboard, most have driven with at least one passenger below 18 years of age or with at least one passenger 18 years or older. Among the small number who have driven while believing they are impaired from an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high with passengers onboard, a sizeable proportion have driven with at least one passenger below 18 years of age and an overwhelming majority have driven with at least one passenger 18 years or older.



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Younger Men Are The Most Frequent Offenders, Admittedly

The Ipsos poll indicates that men 18 to 34 continue to be more likely to drive while believing they are impaired from alcohol, cannabis or an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high. Among those who used alcohol in the past 30 days, more than one in ten (13%) have driven while believing they are impaired from alcohol at least once in the past 6 months, with a large majority of these (67%) driving with passengers onboard. Among those who used cannabis in the past 30 days, more than one in ten (13%) have driven believing they are impaired from cannabis at least once in the past 6 months, with a sizeable number of these driving with passengers. Among those who used an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high (top drugs mentioned: stimulant, hallucinogen, depressant, etc.) in the past 30 days, one in ten (12%), have driven while thinking they are impaired from these substances at least once in the past 6 months, with all of these driving with passengers onboard.

Not Feeling Impaired, Not Having To Drive Far Or Thinking They Could Drive Carefully Remain The Top Reasons for Driving After Using Alcohol, Cannabis, Or Illicit Drug Or Other Substances

Regardless of product consumed, the main reasons for driving within two hours of consuming alcohol, using cannabis (2 hours after smoking/vaporizing cannabis/4 hours of ingesting cannabis), or within two hours of consuming an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high are: they don't feel impaired, they don't have to drive far, or they think they could drive carefully. Looking at the proportions who mention these reasons by the product consumed:

- Among those who consumed alcohol in the past 30 days and drove a vehicle within 2 hours of consuming alcohol, the top reasons are: I did not feel impaired (63%), followed by I thought I could drive carefully (34%) and I did not have to drive very far (30%).
- Among those who consumed cannabis in the past 30 days and drove a vehicle within 2 hours of smoking/vaporizing cannabis/4 hours of ingesting cannabis, the top reasons are: I did not feel impaired (56%), followed by I thought I could drive carefully (34%) and I did not have to drive very far (25%).
- Among those who consumed an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high in the past 30 days and drove a vehicle within 2 hours of using these substances, the top reasons are: I did not feel impaired (48%), I did not have to drive very far (30%) and I thought I could drive carefully (29%).



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Although Some Misconceptions About The Seriousness of Impaired Driving Are Down, Increased Number Knowingly Ridden With a Driver Who Was Impaired

The results from the poll indicate that Canadian drivers continue to express some level of nonchalance regarding impaired driving, but some of these beliefs are down from Spring 2021. Three in ten (30%, unchanged from Spring 2021) Canadian drivers think there is a big difference between driving after consuming alcohol and driving after consuming cannabis. About one in ten, each, think it is “no big deal” to drive after consuming a few drinks (12%, -3 points from Spring 2021), consuming cannabis (12% -2 points), or consuming an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not), or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high (8%). Although fewer now say they have let friends drive after consuming alcohol when they know it isn’t safe (21%, -2 points), more, now three in ten (29%, +3 points), have knowingly ridden as a passenger in a car with a driver who was impaired.

About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between November 30 and December 7, 2021 on behalf of MADD Canada. For this survey, a sample of 2,377 Canadians aged 18-70 with a valid driver’s licence was interviewed online. Quotas and weighting are employed to ensure that the sample’s composition reflects that of the Canadian population aged 18-70 of drinking age according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 2.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18-70 of drinking` age been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP www.ipsos.com