

FACTUM

Young Men Remain More Likely than Canadian Drivers in General to Drive 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

But These Behaviours Are Reported by Canadian Drivers of All Age Groups

Toronto, ON, September 19, 2022 – A poll conducted in May by Ipsos on behalf of MADD Canada continues to find that men aged 18 to 34 years are more likely than the average Canadian driver to drive 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. This data is consistent with MADD Canada statistics that indicate that the rates of road fatalities caused by alcohol and/or drugs is higher among young men.

Canadians Across All Age Groups Are Driving While Believing They Are Impaired

Among the 71% (+4pts from November 2021) 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 an increasing number, more than four in ten (45%, up 10pts) driving with passengers onboard. Among the 30% (+3pts) of drivers who used cannabis in the past 30 days, an increasing number, one in ten (11%, +4pts) have driven believing they are impaired from cannabis at least once in the last 6 months, and a majority of these (55%) driving with passengers. Among the 13% (-3pts) of drivers who used an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high (top drugs mentioned: hallucinogen, depressant, stimulant, opioid, etc.) in the past 30 days, an increasing number, almost two in ten (18%, +11pts), have driven while believing they are impaired from any of these substances at least once in the last 6 months, and a declining majority of these (58%, -25pts) driving with passengers onboard.

Among drivers who have driven while believing they are impaired from alcohol with passengers onboard, an increasing number, now six in ten (61%, +16pts), have driven with at least one passenger below 18 years of age and more than nine in ten (93%) 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, more than six in ten (60%) have driven with at least one passenger below 18 years of age and nine in ten (90%) 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, seven in ten (69%) have driven with at least one passenger below 18 years of age and nine in ten (90%) have driven with at least one passenger 18 years or older.

However, Younger Men Report Higher Rates of Driving While Believing They Are Impaired

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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, almost two in ten (17%) have driven while believing they are impaired from alcohol at least once in the past 6 months, with a large majority of these (76%) driving with passengers onboard. Among those who used cannabis in the past 30 days, almost two in ten (16%) have driven believing they are impaired from cannabis at least once in the past 6 months, with a large majority (69%) 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: hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, inhalant, etc.) in the past 30 days, two in ten (18%), have driven while thinking they are impaired from these substances at least once in the past 6 months, with a majority (62%) driving with passengers onboard.

**It should be noted that the reported figures for young males driving with passengers on board when they believed they were impaired by cannabis or an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high are based on very small sample sizes. Regardless, the figures for young men have been consistently higher across all three waves of this research.*

Those with Children Below 18 Living in Household Also More Likely to Report Driving While Believing They Are Impaired

Although the two previous waves of research indicated that drivers with children below 18 years old living in the household were also more likely to engage in these behaviours, we did not emphasize this as we needed to ensure that this was not just a blip caused by the stress of the pandemic but an actual trend. For the third wave, the Ipsos poll indicates that those with children below 18 living in the household are more likely than Canadians in general to drive while believing they are impaired by alcohol, cannabis or an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high. Among these respondents, one in ten (11%, vs. 8% among Canadian drivers in general) reported driving while they believed they were impaired by alcohol, while about two in ten (16% vs. 11%) reported driving while they thought they were impaired by cannabis, and three in ten (29% vs. 19%) reported driving while they believed they were impaired by an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high.



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Locations of Consumption of Alcohol or Cannabis or Other Drugs Are Quite Similar

Regardless of product consumed, the locations of where the product was consumed is quite similar.

- Among those who consumed alcohol in the past 30 days and drove while believing they were impaired, the top locations are: friend's/relative's home (46%), restaurant (40%), their own home (35%) or bar (32%).
- Among those who consumed cannabis in the past 30 days and drove while believing they were impaired from smoking/vaping cannabis, the top location is their own home (61%), followed by friend's/relative's home (42%), restaurant (29%) or party (26%).
- 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 while believing they were impaired, the top location is their own home (59%), followed by restaurant (32%), party (27%), or a friend's/relative's home (26%).

Misconceptions About The Seriousness of Impaired Driving Continue

The results from the poll indicate that misconceptions about the seriousness of driving after consuming alcohol or cannabis continue.

- Three in ten (31%) Canadian drivers agree that there is a big difference between driving after consuming alcohol and driving after consuming cannabis.
- About one in ten each say that driving after consuming a few drinks (13%), consuming cannabis (10%), or consuming an illicit drug, medication (prescribed or not) or other substance for recreational purposes or to get high (7%) is no big deal.

About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 25 and June 10, 2022 on behalf of MADD Canada. For this survey, a sample of 3000 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 ± 2.0 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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