

CANNABIS LEGALIZATION



In April 2017, the Government of Canada introduced legislation to legalize, regulate, and restrict access to cannabis – Bills *C-45 Cannabis Act* and *C-46 An Act to amend the Criminal Code*. This legislation is expected to come into effect by July 2018.

PROPOSED FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Cannabis is currently an illegal substance (with the exception of authorized medical use) under the federal *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*.

The federal legislation would:

- allow adults to possess up to 30 grams of legally produced cannabis;
- allow adults to grow up to four cannabis plants per household;
- set the minimum age for purchase and use at 18 years of age, with the option for provinces to increase the age limit;
- enable a regulatory regime for the licensed production of cannabis, which would be controlled by the federal government;
- enable a regulatory regime for the distribution and sale of cannabis, which would be controlled by the provincial government; and
- establish new provisions to address drug-impaired driving, as well as making several changes to the overall legal framework to address alcohol impaired driving.

Table 1: Jurisdictional responsibilities

** provinces will have the ability to strengthen legislation for these areas under federal jurisdiction

Activity	Responsible	
	Federal	Provincial
Possession limits **	Y	N
Trafficking	Y	N
Advertisement & packaging **	Y	N
Impaired driving	Y	Y
Medical cannabis	Y	N
Seed-to-sale tracking system	Y	N
Production (cultivation and processing)	Y	N
Age limit (federal minimum) **	Y	N
Public health	Y	Y
Education	Y	Y
Taxation	Y	Y
Home cultivation (growing plants at home) **	Y	N
Distribution and wholesaling	N	Y
Retail model	N	Y
Retail location and rules	N	Y
Regulatory compliance	Y	Y
Public consumption	N	Y
Land use/zoning	N	Y

[Learn more about the legalization and regulation of cannabis in Canada.](#)

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND'S APPROACH

While legalization of cannabis is a federal decision, provinces and municipalities have significant areas of responsibility (see **Table 1: Jurisdictional responsibilities**).

The Government of Prince Edward Island has an obligation and an opportunity to actively shape how the province will adapt to cannabis legalization in a way that best suits Islanders' needs, circumstances, and values.

Our focus is on:

- limiting the illegal market for cannabis;
- keeping cannabis out of the hands of children and youth
- protecting public health; and
- promoting safety on roads, in workplaces, and in public spaces.

To do this, government will continue to assess the implications of legalization, engage with a wide range of Islanders to hear their views and determine their needs, explore regional opportunities and respond in a way that makes the most sense for the province.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

There are two ways to share your thoughts on what cannabis legislation should look like for Prince Edward Island:

1. take the online survey (about 10 minutes) available until September 30 at www.princeedwardisland.ca/cannabis or
2. make a written submission, online at www.princeedwardisland.ca/cannabis or drop off your submission at any Access PEI location across the province

Your feedback from these activities will be used to guide decision making on the legalization of cannabis on PEI.

3. TIMELINE FOR LEGALIZATION OF CANNABIS

- **April 13, 2017** Introduction of federal cannabis legislation
- **Aug – Oct 2017** Public and stakeholder engagement on PEI's approach to cannabis legalization
- **Oct - Dec 2017** Review of engagement findings
- **Winter-Spring 2018** Draft and present provincial legislative changes related to cannabis Public education campaign
- **July 2018** Implementation of Cannabis legalization

ABOUT CANNABIS

Cannabis – Cannabis is a broad term used to describe the various products derived from the leaves, flowers and resins of the Cannabis sativa and Cannabis indica plants, or hybrids of the two. These products exist in various forms and are used for different purposes (e.g. medical, recreational, industrial).

Cannabis vs. marijuana – The federal government has adopted the term “cannabis” to describe cannabis products in general, as opposed to the commonly-used term “marijuana” (which only describes parts of the plant).

Cannabis consumption – Cannabis can be used in many ways, some which may lead to second-hand smoke/vapour. Uses include:

- smoke (e.g., a joint, blunt, spliff, pipe, or bong);
- vaporize with a vaporizer (non-portable);
- vaporize with a vape pen or e-cigarette (portable);
- eat in food (e.g., brownies, cakes, cookies or candy);
- drink (e.g., tea, juice, cola, alcohol, other drinks);
- dab (e.g. applying to a hot surface with a metal tool); and
- other (e.g., tinctures/drops under tongue, applied directly to skin in a lotion)

Legal use – Possessing and selling cannabis for non-medical purposes is still illegal everywhere in Canada. However, the federal [Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations](#) allow for reasonable access to cannabis for medical purposes for Canadians who have been authorized to use cannabis for medical purposes by their health care practitioner.

Impact on health

Recognizing the health risks of cannabis is a priority as we consider options for legalization. While there is some understanding of the shorter-term risks of cannabis use (e.g. effects on memory, attention and psychomotor function) knowledge about long-term risks of cannabis use (e.g. permanent harm to mental functioning, risks of depression and anxiety disorders) is limited, mainly because cannabis use has been prohibited, so comprehensive studies have not been undertaken. Health risks associated with cannabis use include:

- **Risks to children and youth:** Generally speaking, studies have consistently found that the earlier cannabis use begins and the more frequently and longer it is used, the greater the risk of potential developmental harms, some of which may be long-lasting or permanent.
- **Risks associated with consumption:** Certain factors are associated with increased risk of harms, including frequent use and use of higher potency products. Driving while impaired by cannabis is associated with an increased risk of accidents and fatalities. Co-use with alcohol may pose an incremental risk for impaired driving and co-use with tobacco may increase smoking-related lung disease.
- **Risks to vulnerable populations:** Studies have found associations between frequent cannabis use and certain mental illnesses (e.g., schizophrenia and psychosis) and between frequent cannabis use during pregnancy and certain adverse cognitive and behavioural outcomes in children.
- **Risks related to interactions with the illicit market:** These include violence and the risks associated with unsafe products, illicit production and exposure to other, more harmful illicit substances.

Source: [A Framework for the Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis in Canada](#).