

# Impairing Hemp Beverages: What Parents and Law Enforcement Need to Know to Keep Kids Safe

May 27, 2026

2:00 p.m. ET



**RESPONSIBILITY.ORG**



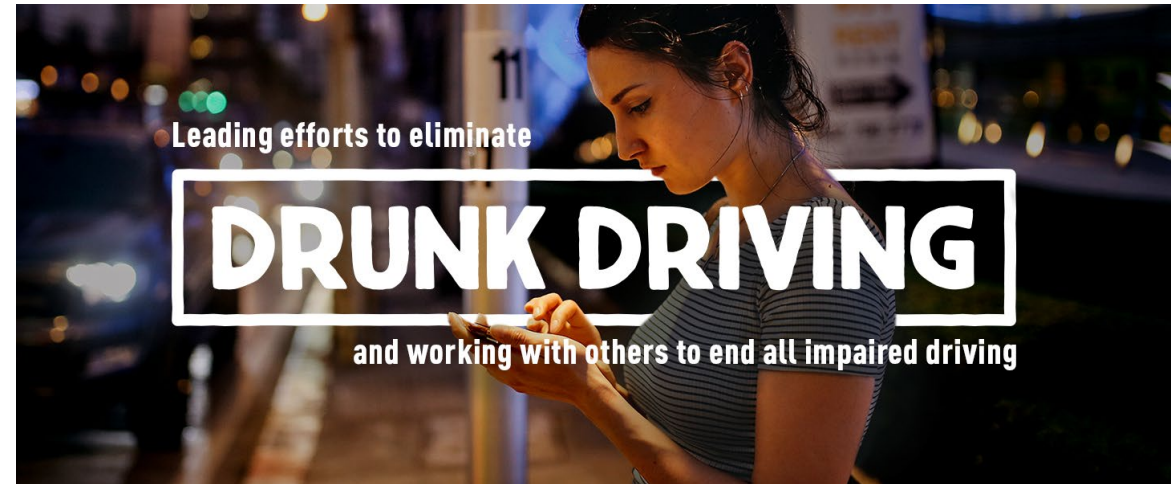
# About Responsibility.org



**RESPONSIBILITY.ORG**

Founded in 1991 by America's leading distillers, Responsibility.org is a national, independent, not-for-profit organization working to **promote a lifetime of alcohol responsibility.**

*Programming is guided by our National Advisory Board, an independent panel of experts and community leaders on the local, state, and national levels.*



# Enhancing a legacy of responsibility and recognizing the power of collective action.

## Responsibility.org Board of Directors



# Panel of Speakers

- **Heather Barkholtz, PhD** | Assistant Professor, University Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy and the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
- **Officer Jayme Derbyshire** | Coordinator for the Chemical Test for Alcohol Unit, Montgomery County Department of Police (Maryland)
- **Leslie Kimball** | Executive Director, [Responsibility.org](https://responsibility.org)

# Information and Prevention

- Responsibility.org and the panelists do not take a formal position on the legal status of these products.
- The information shared here is intended to be educational only.
- Ultimately, our goal is to keep kids safe.

# HEMP vs CANNABIS

Both come from *cannabis sativa* plants

Legal distinction based on  $\Delta^9$ -THC concentration



Hemp

0.3%  $\Delta^9$ -THC  
or less



Cannabis

More than  
0.3%  $\Delta^9$ -THC

# CBD vs THC



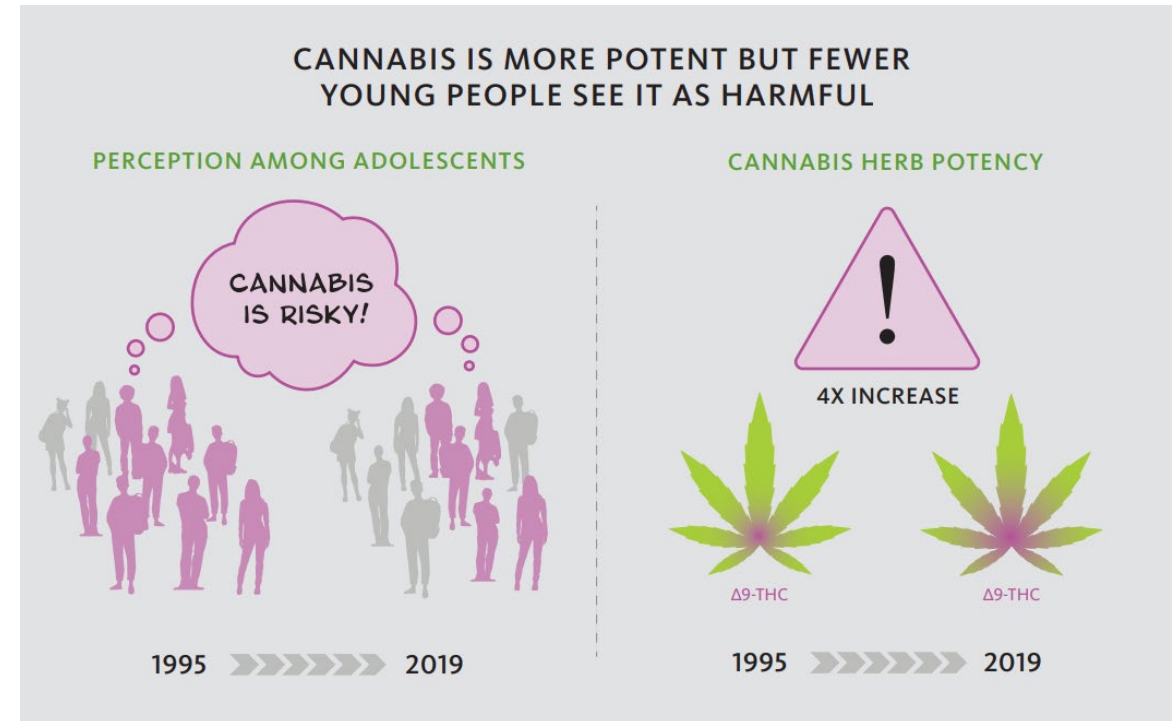
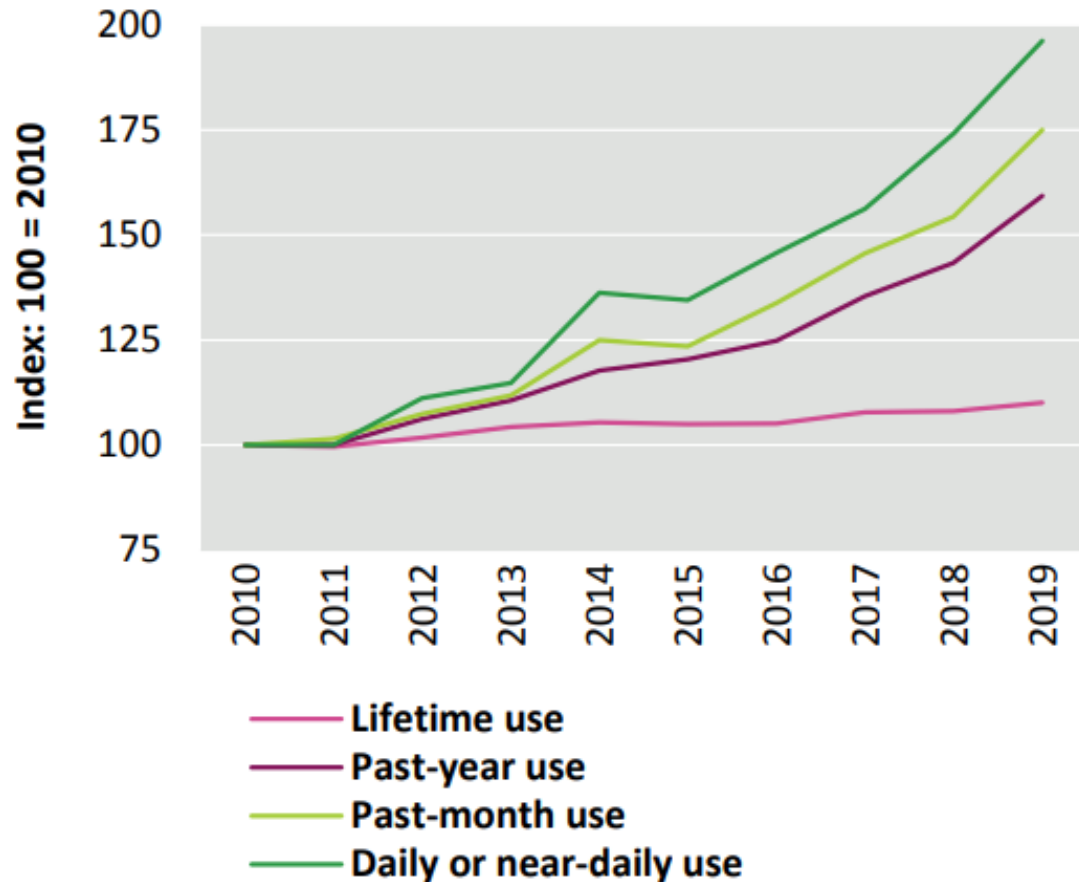
CBD is generally  
non-intoxicating

$\Delta^9$ -THC,  $\Delta^8$ -THC, etc.  
will impair consumers



**Hemp can be impairing**

# Cannabis use and potency increasing, perception of risk is decreasing



# How to Read the Label of a Cannabinoid Beverage



1

## Stated compounds

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CBD,  $\Delta^9$ -THC, etc.

2

## Dose

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5, 10, 15, 20 mg

3

## Servings

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Servings per container

# Myths vs Facts

Myth	Fact
Hemp products can't get you high	Some hemp-derived products contain intoxicating cannabinoids
If it's sold legally, it must be safe for kids	Legal availability does not mean risk free
THC beverages are the same as CBD drinks	CBD is generally non-intoxicating; THC beverages may impair
Driving high is safer than driving drunk	THC can impair reaction time, attention, and judgement
You can always tell how strong a product is	Labeling and potency can vary substantially across products

# General indicators of impairment

Cannabis:

Indicator	Observable Effect
Pupil Size	Dilated
Pulse Rate	Elevated
Blood Pressure	Elevated
Eye appearance	Reddened conjunctiva, eyelid tremors
<b>Other indicators:</b> Body tremors, disoriented, euphoria, impaired memory, drowsiness, impaired perception of time and distance, paranoia, mood changes, lack of concentration, increased appetite, sedation	

*\* To note: Everyone is different. These indicators are present for some under the influence, but not for others. Some people may have all indicators listed above and some may have very few, or potentially none.*

# General Indicators

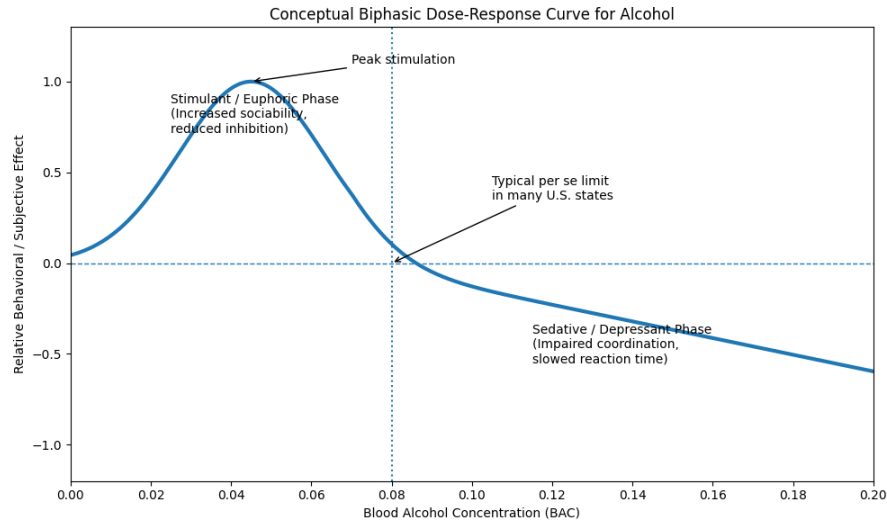
- HGN- **Not present**
- VGN- **Not present**
- LOC- **Present**
- Pupils- **Dilated**



- Body tremors
- Disoriented
- Eyelid tremors
- Impaired perception of time and distance
- Increased appetite
- Marked reddening of conjunctiva
- Possible paranoia
- Relaxed inhibitions



# Impairment – Knowns and Unknowns

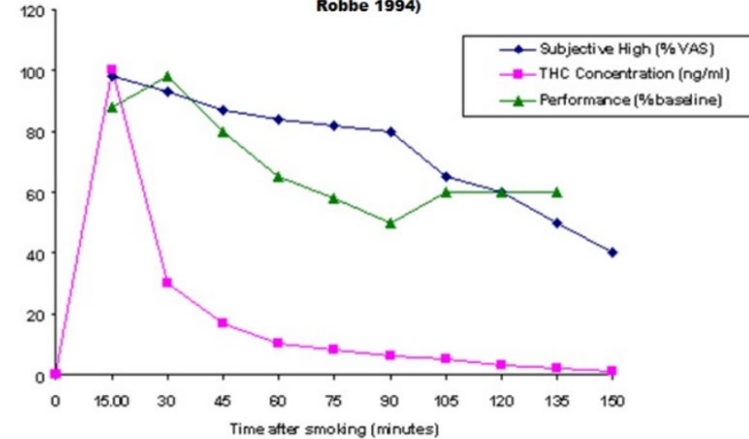


Source: Modified from Cui, C., & Koob, G. F. (2017). Titrating tipsy targets: The neurobiology of low-dose alcohol. *Trends in Pharmacological Sciences*, 38(6), 556-568.

**Alcohol** – scientifically established how alcohol affects an individual and how that systematically produces increased crash risk

Source: Lacey, J. H., Kelley-Baker, T., Berning, A., Romano, E., Ramirez, A., Yao, J., ...& Compton R. (2016, December). Drug and alcohol crash risk: A case-control study (Report No. DOT HS 812 355). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Time Course of Standardized THC Concentration in Plasma, Performance Deficit and Subjective High after Smoking Marijuana (Adapted from Berghaus et al. 1998, Sticht and Käferstein 1998 and Robbe 1994)



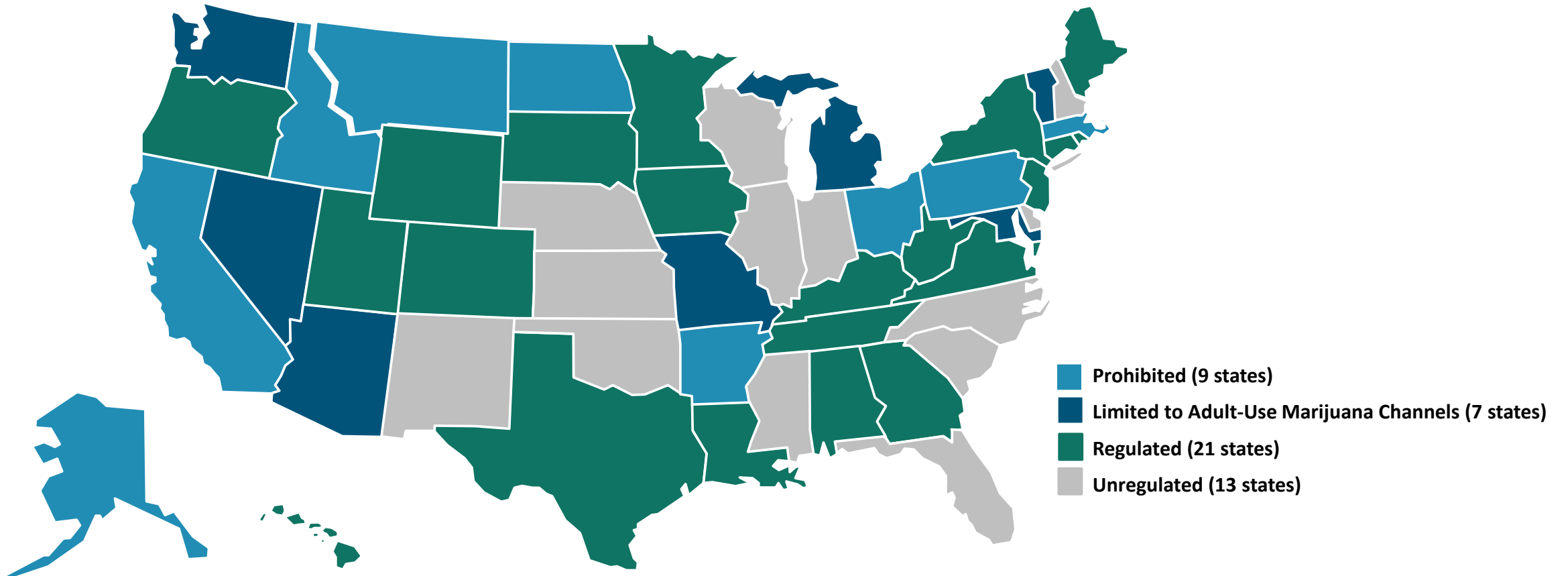
**Smoking THC/cannabis** – less predictable; lacks same precision of alcohol

Source: Compton, R. (2017, July). Marijuana-impaired driving – A report to Congress. (DOT HS 812 440). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

**THC beverages** – even more unpredictable; needs more research



# Frenzied state level activity on intoxicating hemp



(as of 5/21/26)

# State Snapshot: Intoxicating Hemp Regulation

- 9 states have prohibited intoxicating hemp (IH): AR, AK, CA, ID, MA, MT, ND, OH, PA
- 7 states limit IH products to legalized marijuana channels (inc. taxation): AZ, MD, MI, MO, NV, VT, WA
  - **CA** will regulate it through the adult-use cannabis program as of 2028
  - **NJ** will limit more than 0.4mg THC to adult-use channels in November 2026
- 21 states have adopted IH regulations: AL, CO, CT, GA, HI, IA, KY, LA, ME, MN, NJ, NY, OR, RI, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, WV, WY
  - Regulations can include age restrictions, license requirements, taxation, limits on THC per container, limits on servings per container, limits on retail access, three-tier systems, etc.
- 8 states have enacted IH-specific taxes: AL, CT, KY, LA, MN, NJ, TN, WV
- Legal challenges abound and enforcement may be stayed in many states
- **Effective Nov. 12, 2026, Federal law will exclude products with more than 0.4mg of THC from the definition of “hemp”**
  - IH products will face same limitations as marijuana in terms of interstate commerce, market access and banking



Thank you –  
have a healthy, safe summer