Marijuana Use and the Workplace: Highlights and Trends

Every year, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) conducts the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

The NSDUH covers a wide range of topics, including employment status, patterns of marijuana and prescription drug use, medical marijuana laws, workplace practices, and absenteeism. In 2013, a nationally representative sample of 55,160 respondents aged 12 years or older completed a household interview. Some key findings are explored as follows.

Spotlight on Full-time Workers and Marijuana Use

Among respondents aged 18–64 in 2013, 59 percent indicated their employment status was full-time. About 1 in 13 full time workers reported using marijuana in the past month. Marijuana users working full time reported using marijuana on an average of 15 days in the past month.

About two-thirds of full-time workers were aged 35–64 years. From 2003 to 2013, the largest increases in the prevalence of marijuana use in the past month were among 26–34-year-olds (+3.2 percent) and 18–25-year-olds (+2.3 percent). For 50–64-year-olds, the prevalence doubled from 1.7 percent in 2003 to 3.4 percent in 2013.

Percentages of the Full-time Workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18–25</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>26–34</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–49</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>50–64</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
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</tbody>
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Marijuana was used an average of 15 days in the past month.
Changes in Marijuana Use During the Past Month

![Graph showing changes in marijuana use from 2003 to 2013.]

Note: Prevalence rates for 2004–2012 were calculated using the NSDUH Public Use Files. Questions about SAMHSA restricted-use data should be sent to samhsa-support@samhsa.hhs.gov.

**Spotlight on Medical Marijuana Laws**

In 2013, the NSDUH added a new question asking whether respondents lived in a state where marijuana use is allowed for medical reasons. Among full-time workers aged 18–64, about one-third reported living in a state where marijuana is approved for medical purposes.

- **Full Time Workers**
  - Live in a state where medical marijuana is legal: 32%
  - Live in a state where medical marijuana is illegal: 68%

In states where medical marijuana is allowed, about 1 in 10 full-time workers used marijuana in the past month. The prevalence of marijuana use in the past month was roughly 7 percent among full-time workers living in states where medical marijuana is prohibited.

**Medical Marijuana Allowed**

- 10% of full-time workers used marijuana in the past month

**Medical Marijuana Prohibited**

- 7% of full-time workers used marijuana in the past month

**Spotlight on Absenteeism and Workplace Policies**

Over the past month, about 1 in 4 full-time workers who used marijuana also missed 1 or more workdays. Twice as many marijuana users skipped 1 or more workdays, and about 2 in 5 users reported ever being arrested compared with less than one-fifth of non-users.

- Missed 1+ workdays in the past month:
  - No marijuana use in the past month: 19%
  - Marijuana use in the past month: 26%

- Skipped 1+ workdays in the past month:
  - No marijuana use in the past month: 7%
  - Marijuana use in the past month: 14%

- Ever arrested:
  - No marijuana use in the past month: 18%

Compared with full-time workers who did not use marijuana in the past month, those who used marijuana indicated that their employer was…

- 30% less likely to offer an Employee Assistance Program
- 40% less likely to distribute information about alcohol and drugs
- 45% less likely to have a written policy about alcohol and drugs

Note: Rates were calculated using multivariable logistic regression controlling for age, gender, and race.