



## BLUF

# THC Usage Across the Fleet Fact Sheet

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This fact sheet will increase commands' understanding of THC and help facilitate communications to Sailors about the use of THC and the ramifications.

The Navy increased drug positives 68% from 3,367 in 2021 to 5,661 in 2022. This increase is due to the rise in THC use (nearly 80% of all positives): including both the delta-8 variant (CBD; testing began in 2021) and the traditional delta-9 variant (cannabis).

While society's acceptance of THC/marijuana is changing, the Navy maintains a zero tolerance policy for drug use. This is based on both federal law and that no test can adequately test someone's fitness for duty based on the amount of THC in their system. The Navy's policy always outweighs any foreign, state, or local ordinance which may permit THC's use, possession, distribution, or prescription. All hands must be vigilant to not consume any products that contain hemp, CBD, or THC.

Leaders should deliberately message in a way that does not make THC consumption a moral issue (right or wrong), as many have family and friends who legally consume THC. Instead, leaders must focus on how THC-use is incompatible with our Navy's mission to prepare to fight and win.

## Who needs to know?

- All Sailors
- All Triads, Chiefs Mess
- All Civilian and Military Supervisors

## What you need to know – key points

- **The accessibility of CBD and THC is increasing across the U.S. and the world**, but the use of CBD oil and other products containing CBD or THC remains prohibited to Sailors.
- Don't lose your career! In the last six years, THC positives have accounted for nearly 80% of drugs detected across the Navy.
- CBD and THC are being added to new products continually. Check the label, read the description, and avoid using products that contain CBD or THC. The best way to avoid THC use is to be vigilant in reading ingredient labels of the items being purchased to ensure it does not contain prohibited substances, per Navy Regulations.
- The Navy continues to have zero tolerance for drug use. THC use is incompatible with our mission to fight and win.

## Sample POD/POW Notes

- **PROTECT YOUR CAREER – AVOID CBD:** CBD products may be legal in your state, but Navy policy prohibits the consumption and use of CBD along with all hemp-derived products. Protect your Navy career! Avoid cannabis and hemp-derived products.
- **THC USE WILL GET YOU SEPARATED FROM THE NAVY:** Remember to check product labels! THC is being put into more and more products - including vapes, distillates, tinctures, gummies, chocolates, and infused beverages. Sailors are prohibited from consuming THC.
- **STAY NAVY – DON'T USE THC:** In the last 5 years, THC-positive drug tests have accounted for nearly 80% of all drugs detected across the Navy. The Navy has zero tolerance for illegal drug use and prescription drug misuse. Check the label, read the description, and avoid using products that contain CBD or THC.



## FAQ

### Q. Why are you sharing this fact sheet now?

**A.** THC has become the top "innocent ingestion" drug – meaning Sailors often claim to ingest THC by accident, in products they didn't think contained THC. Since 2021 when the DoD drug testing panel was updated to detect delta-8 THC, THC positives increased 89.1% between FY21 and FY22. In the last 5 years, the amount of delta-9 THC positives has increased by 117% fleet wide.



**Q. What is the difference between marijuana and hemp?**

**A.** Marijuana and hemp come from the same species of plant (cannabis). Marijuana contains delta-8 and delta-9 THC. Hemp also contains delta-9 THC but at a lower level. CBD, cannabidiol, is derived from hemp.

**Q. What is the difference between delta-8 and delta-9 THC?**

**A.** Delta-8 THC has similar effects to delta-9 THC and is normally produced by converting hemp-derived CBD. These products are legal in many areas but are not federally regulated. Due to CBD products containing small amounts of delta-9 THC, these products are unauthorized for Navy Sailors.

**Q. What happens if a Sailor tests positive for THC?**

**A.** Sailors who test positive for any form of THC (delta-8 or delta-9) are subject to administrative separation processing, potential loss of security clearance and removal from special duties.

**Q. What types of products could contain THC?**

**A.** THC can be found in food products, smoking or vaping products, drinks - including energy drinks and **even water** - oils, lotions, and cosmetics. CBD can be found in many skin products, like lotions and oils used in personal health services - including spa treatments.

**Q. Can Sailors use CBD products?**

**A.** No. CBD products are not allowed under the Navy's drug policy. Products that include THC are typically age-restricted and more expensive than non-THC products. They often have some sign on the label that it contains THC because it's a selling feature of the product.

**Q. Why can't I use CBD if it doesn't contain THC?**

**A.** Not every product label is accurate because it is not federally regulated. Some products deliberately do not provide the true contents of the product to circumvent the law, or inadvertently under-report THC content because these products are neither tested nor regulated by the FDA. Sailors must be careful to avoid any product that may contain THC or CBD.

**Q. Can Sailors use hemp products?**

**A.** No. ALNAV 074/20 prohibits Sailors and Marines from using any product made or derived from hemp, including CBD, regardless of the product's THC concentration, claimed or actual, and regardless of whether such product may lawfully be bought, sold, and used under the law applicable to civilians. "Use" means to inject, ingest, inhale, or otherwise introduce into the human body. "Use" includes the use of hemp products designed to penetrate through the skin layer, including but not limited to transdermal patches. "Use" also includes the use of topical products containing hemp, such as shampoos, conditioners, lotions, lip balms, or soaps.

**Q. In addition to career impacts, what are the possible risks for delta-8 THC use?**

**A.** The use of marijuana, delta-8, or CBD with alcohol or other drugs that slow brain activity, such as those used to treat anxiety, panic, stress, or sleep disorders, increases the risk of sedation and drowsiness leading to increased risk of injury. Research has shown that marijuana and related products cause liver damage, depression, paranoia, memory/processing problems, infertility, cardiac problems, and cancer. CBD specific side effects include changes in alertness, gastrointestinal distress, irritability, and agitation. Long-term effects have shown permanent IQ loss, increased risk for suicide and psychotic episodes, poor performance issues due to lack of coordination, slowed reaction time, increased likelihood for relationship problems, decreased educational outcomes, and lower career achievement.

**Q. How can Sailors avoid unknowingly being exposed to THC?**

**A.** Some of the best ways to avoid unknowing THC product exposure include being vigilant in reading the ingredient labels of the items being purchased to ensure they don't contain substances that Navy Regulations prohibit. In addition, Sailors should steer clear of products that are marketed as 'legal' alternatives to known prohibited drug products. Many products are sold that claim to provide the effects of a drug without being the drug and turn out actually to have the drug in them.

**Q. What should a Sailor do if they think they have accidentally ingested?**

**A.** Sailors should notify their chain of command immediately, **BEFORE** a urinalysis occurs.