



BLUF

THC Usage Across the Fleet Fact Sheet

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This fact sheet is intended to increase commands' understanding of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)¹ and help facilitate communications with Sailors about THC misuse and potential ramifications.²

From 2021 to 2022, the Navy saw a 68% increase in drug positives on urinalysis results (from 3,367 in 2021 to 5,661 in 2022). This increase is due to the rise in THC drug positives (nearly 80% of all positives). The increase reflects a rise in drug positives for 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 misuse. The Navy's drug misuse prevention and control policies align with overarching guidance from the Department of Defense (DoD). The Navy's policies on drug misuse derive from federal law such as UCMJ, Art. 112a (which criminalizes the wrongful use of controlled substances, including prescription medications), and from lawful general orders such as ALNAV 074/20, which prohibits the use of hemp products via UCMJ, Article 92. Sailors are expected to comply with the Navy's zero tolerance policy regardless of civilian laws or ordinances which may permit THC's use, possession, or distribution. The Navy's zero tolerance policy on drug misuse (including the Navy's prohibition on the misuse of hemp products) applies to all Sailors regardless of local, state, or foreign laws which may allow the use of certain substances. All Hands must be vigilant in avoiding products that contain THC to include delta-8 THC, delta-9 THC, hemp, hemp products, and CBD.

Leaders should deliberately message the Navy's policy in a way that does not make THC consumption a moral issue, as many of our Sailors have family and friends who legally consume THC or who lawfully use personal products that contain THC. Instead, leaders must focus on how THC misuse 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 misuse of hemp and hemp products (to include 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. A THC positive on a Navy urinalysis may result in administrative or judicial consequences that can adversely impact a Sailor's advancement, promotion, and career.
- CBD and THC are being added to new products continually. Sailors should be educated that the FDA does not regulate THC and CBD products. While Sailors should be educated to check labels, read ingredient descriptions, and avoid using or consuming products that contain CBD or THC, Sailors should also be aware that product labels may not accurately reflect levels of CBD or THC within a product. Sailors should avoid any products whose labels indicate that they contain THC, hemp, hemp products, or CBD.
- The Navy continues to have zero tolerance for drug misuse. THC use is incompatible with our mission to fight and win.

¹ THC includes delta-8 THC, delta-9 THC, hemp, hemp derived products, and Cannabidiol (CBD) regardless of whether the CBD was derived in a manner consistent with the Farm Bill.

² This fact sheet is not intended for use in disciplinary actions (administrative or judicial) against Sailors, and is not a substitute for legal advice from a qualified legal advisor.



Sample POD/POW Notes

- **PROTECT YOUR CAREER – AVOID CBD:** CBD products may be legal in some states, but Navy policy prohibits the consumption and use of CBD along with all hemp-derived products. Navy Sailors should avoid cannabis and hemp-derived products.
- **THC MISUSE MAY RESULT IN ADMINISTRATIVE SEPARATION PROCESSING:** Drug misuse may result in the initiation of administrative separation proceedings on the basis of wrongful use or commission of a serious offense due to failure to obey a lawful order or regulation. Remember to check product labels to avoid THC misuse! THC is being put into more and more products - including vapes, distillates, tinctures, gummies, chocolates, and infused beverages. Sailors are prohibited from misusing THC, to include THC-8 (hemp products) and THC-9.
- **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 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 are increasingly claiming that they have unknowingly ingested or been exposed to THC in products they did not realize contained a prohibited substance (including CBD/delta-8 THC/hemp). The DoD drug testing panel was updated in 2021 to detect delta-8 THC. Between FY21 and FY22, THC positives increased 89.1%. 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. Delta 8 THC and hemp-derived CBD (produced in accordance with the Farm Bill) products are legal in many areas but are not federally regulated. Products containing delta 8 THC, hemp, hemp products, or CBD 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) may be subject to adverse administrative separation processing and/or disciplinary action, 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. These products often have information on their label indicating that the product contains THC because THC is often marketed as a selling feature.

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

A. CBD products may contain small amounts of delta-9 THC. However, product labeling for CBD is not federally regulated, resulting in some product labels either under-reporting or over-reporting the product’s true contents. 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. Does the Navy allow Sailors to 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 application or introduction onto the body 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. Sailors should be educated on the Navy's zero tolerance policy on drug misuse, to include the Navy's prohibition on the use of delta 8 THC, hemp products, hemp, and CBD. One of the best ways to avoid unknowing THC product exposure is vigilance in reading the ingredient labels to ensure items do not contain substances that are prohibited by Navy laws or regulations. In addition, Sailors should steer clear of products that are marketed as 'legal' alternatives to known prohibited drug products. Many products currently sold 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 if they believe they have innocently or accidentally ingested THC. Sailors should not wait until a urinalysis occurs; notice to the command should occur **BEFORE** a urinalysis.