



# GNWT Cannabis Engagement

## Information and Survey Questions



The Government of Canada has introduced the proposed *Cannabis Act* and has made a public commitment to legalize cannabis by July 2018. The proposed Act would set the national framework for cannabis legalization while giving provinces and territories the authority to establish measures to control sale and distribution, minimum age for purchase and consumption, drug-impaired driving, workplace safety, public smoking of cannabis and more.

The GNWT is committed to having effective measures in place to protect the health and safety of our people and communities and wants to hear from Northerners on the best ways to do it.

### Have Your Say

The GNWT knows it is important to create a system where residents have access to safe cannabis that meets quality, security and health standards set by the Government of Canada.

We know this issue matters to Northerners, and we want you to tell us how you think the GNWT should approach regulating cannabis in the NWT. The federal government has said it wants to make cannabis legal across Canada by July 2018. This means the GNWT has a tight timeline to engage with residents, develop, draft and pass legislation.

The GNWT is committed to getting our approach right, and urges NWT resident to contribute to the process through community and online engagement opportunities. We will not make decisions until we've heard from Northerners.

**On the following pages you will find survey questions about cannabis legalization in the NWT, and the principles that have been proposed to guide our work.** Once we have heard from NWT residents, we will make concrete plans, including developing the legislation the NWT will need to regulate cannabis. The GNWT will be holding community meetings and making this survey available for online comments. Public input will be received until September 22.

### Proposed Principles

Protecting the health and safety of Northerners, while complying with any national cannabis laws and requirements set by the federal government, is a priority for the GNWT. In keeping with that priority, we are proposing the following principles to guide our work.

Our approach to legalization of cannabis should:

- restrict youth access to cannabis, and protect young people from promotion or enticements to use cannabis;
- allow adults to possess and access regulated, quality controlled legal cannabis;
- discourage drug-impaired driving;
- protect workers and the public from drug impairment in the workplace;
- protect public health by controlling the public smoking of cannabis;
- enhance public awareness of the health risks associated with cannabis;
- provide a safe and secure retail regime for the adult purchase of cannabis; and
- provide for local options to establish cannabis distribution and consumption restrictions and prohibitions.



## Survey Questions

1. Do the proposed principles (listed above) describe what the GNWT should be doing as they develop policies and legislation about legal cannabis?
2. Are there any other principles you think the GNWT should add to this list?
3. Are there any proposed principles that should be removed?
4. The proposed federal *Cannabis Act* sets 18 as the age that cannabis can be legally purchased. Provinces and territories will have the ability to match that age or to reasonably raise the legal age. The legal age for buying or drinking liquor in the NWT is 19.

## Should the legal age be raised above the minimum age of 18?



5. Under the proposed federal *Cannabis Act*, adults will be allowed to carry up to 30 grams of dried legal cannabis, and they will be able to share up to 30 grams of dried legal cannabis with other adults. Adults will not be allowed to share with those under the legal age, or to receive any form of payment for the cannabis they share. Provinces and territories have the option of reasonably reducing the maximum “carry” amount and the sharing limit. A cigarette usually weighs about 1 gram, which gives an idea how much 30 grams of cannabis would amount to.

**Should the 30-gram limit for possessing and sharing cannabis be lowered?**

6. The proposed federal legislation would allow adults to grow up to four cannabis plants in their home for personal use. Each plant could be a maximum of 100 cm (one meter) in height. Provinces and territories may reasonably reduce the number of plants allowed in a household.

**Should the number of cannabis plants allowed in a household be less than four?**

7. In addition to the proposed federal *Cannabis Act*, changes to the *Criminal Code* are also being made by the Government of Canada that will strengthen drug-impaired driving laws. Police officers will be able to use approved roadside oral fluid drug screeners that would detect cannabis and other illegal drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine (“meth”). There will be three new offences related to drug-impaired driving established in the *Criminal Code*: having a prohibited level of a drug, a combination of drugs, or a combination of drugs and alcohol in blood within two hours of driving. Depending on the type of offence, penalties may include fines, driver’s license suspensions, and imprisonment if it is not the person’s first offence. In addition to these new offences, provinces and territories may choose to impose additional options for dealing with drug-impaired driving.

**What do you think should be done to prevent drug-impaired driving?**



8. The legalization of cannabis will not give employees the right to freely use marijuana in the workplace or to come to work “under the influence”. Employees will be expected to show up sober and ready to work. Employers will be able to discipline employees who use cannabis in a way that negatively impacts their job performance or threatens workplace safety. The Workers’ Safety and Compensation Commission will deal with workplace impairment through regulations and policies.

**Do you think there should be special rules to deal with the use of drugs at work?**

9. Provinces and territories will need to decide what rules should be made on smoking cannabis in public, including the possibility of a ban. There are health concerns regarding the public use of cannabis and the harmful impacts of second-hand smoke on non-smoking residents – particularly infants, children and youth.

- a. **Do you think people should be able to smoke cannabis in public?**
- b. **Are there particular public areas where smoking cannabis should be strictly prohibited?**
- c. **Are there public places where it should be allowed? If so, under what circumstances?**



10. The Government of Canada has begun public cannabis education activities. The 2017-18 federal budget proposes to invest \$9.6 million in public education on cannabis. The GNWT wants to ensure that NWT residents are well educated on the risks associated with cannabis, and will undertake ongoing education and awareness campaigns. For example, in addition to health concerns about second-hand smoke, there is no known safe amount of cannabis use during pregnancy, and there is a growing body of research on the impacts of the use of cannabis on brain development. We also recognize that the use of cannabis can have social impacts on families and communities.

a. **How do you think the GNWT can most effectively reach the public to inform them of health and safety risks of cannabis?**

b. **Who are the most critical members of the public to educate and increase awareness?**

11. The proposed federal *Cannabis Act* sets minimum health and safety standards that must be included in provincial and territorial legislation on cannabis, but it will be up to each province and territory to decide how cannabis will be sold and distributed to their residents. Provinces and territories may decide to allow retail outlets and storefronts, or to establish mail order systems. There could be mixed storefront and mail order sale systems. The NWT has three basic choices:

- Liquor Commission model – sales controlled by a GNWT agency (possibly the Liquor Commission) and taxation will be included in mark-ups that make the retail price consistent with other jurisdictions. In the locations where there is a store, the consumer would purchase in person. Shipments to outlying communities would be similar to the “mail order” or air delivery system used by the Liquor Commission for liquor. This system provides the greatest “room” for community involvement in restricting cannabis use.
- Tobacco model – sales restricted to licenced retail outlets with tax applied to retail sales but collected at the wholesale/distributor level. Would permit a coordinated approach with other jurisdictions for taxing cannabis.
- Do nothing – federal model of direct mail and internet sales will apply, similar to current federal medical marijuana system. Including controls for restricting sales to minors would be more difficult under this system.

Illegal production, distribution or sale of cannabis will be a serious offence under the proposed federal legislation.





On the following page you will find a detailed timeline which will give you background information on how we got to this point.

**October 2015:** The Liberal Party released its platform for the 2015 federal election, which included a promise to legalize marijuana. The platform indicated that:

"Canada's current system of marijuana prohibition does not work. It does not prevent young people from using marijuana and too many Canadians end up with criminal records for possessing small amounts of the drug. Arresting and prosecuting these offenses is expensive for our criminal justice system. It traps too many Canadians in the criminal justice system for minor, non-violent offenses. At the same time, the proceeds from the illegal drug trade support organized crime and greater threats to public safety, like human trafficking and hard drugs. To ensure that we keep marijuana out of the hands of children, and the profits out of the hands of criminals, we will legalize, regulate, and restrict access to marijuana."

**November 2015:** The Prime Minister [publicly released letters](#) giving specific directions to the new federal Ministers. These letters instructed the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, and the Minister of Health to create a federal-provincial-territorial process that would lead to the legalization and regulation of marijuana.

**June 2016:** The three federal Ministers announced the creation of a nine member Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation ("the Task Force"). The Task Force was told to consult broadly and to give advice on how to "legalize, regulate, and restrict access" to cannabis.

**November 2016:** The Task Force completed its report after consulting with Canadians, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, Indigenous governments and representative organizations, youth, patients and experts on issues related to cannabis. [The final report](#) of the Task Force is posted on the Government of Canada website.

**April 2017:** The federal government introduced its proposed [Cannabis Act](#) in Parliament. If passed, the Act will create rules for legalizing, strictly regulating and restricting access to cannabis. Canadians who use and possess cannabis while following the new rules will no longer be committing an offence under the *Criminal Code*. There will be new laws to punish people who give cannabis to minors, people who sell cannabis without authority, and impaired drivers. More details on what is included in the federal legislation can be found on the [Government of Canada website](#).

**Summer 2017:** The Government of the Northwest Territories is engaging with residents on best ways to approach the legalization of cannabis in the NWT.

**Fall 2017:** The Government of the Northwest Territories will release a "What We Heard" document. Information collected in this document will be considered as the GNWT makes specific plans, including any new legislation that is needed.

**July 2018:** If the proposed *Cannabis Act* is approved by Parliament, the federal government has said that cannabis will be legal by July 2018. New NWT legislation would come into force at the same time.



***Thank you for providing your feedback. If you have any additional comments or would like to keep up to date on this initiative, please email [cannabislegislation@gov.nt.ca](mailto:cannabislegislation@gov.nt.ca) or visit [www.eia.gov.nt.ca/cannabis-legislation](http://www.eia.gov.nt.ca/cannabis-legislation)***

**Please Note:** Although this process is meant to lead towards the legalization of cannabis across Canada, possessing and selling cannabis for non-medical purposes is still against the law in Canada. Until such time that the law changes, police in the NWT will continue to enforce the present offences for illegal cannabis possession and sales.