

DRIVE HIGH PEOPLE DIE



Roadside drug testing

- Police conduct roadside saliva tests to detect drivers who have recently consumed cannabis, speed and/or ecstasy. Like breath testing for alcohol, roadside drug testing will be random.
- Tests detect the presence of THC (the active component in cannabis), methylamphetamine (also known as speed, ice or crystal meth) and MDMA (also known as ecstasy).
- Testing is part of South Australia's Strategic Plan target to reduce road fatalities by 40% by 2010.
- Drugs impair the ability to drive safely. In South Australia between 2003 and 2005, over 23% of drivers or riders killed and tested for the presence of the drugs THC, methylamphetamine and ecstasy, had detectable levels of one or a combination of these drugs.
- Existing Driving Under the Influence (DUI) laws continue to apply to alcohol and all drugs. Under legislation based on zero tolerance, it is an offence to drive or attempt to drive a motor vehicle with THC, methylamphetamine and/or MDMA present in your oral fluid or blood.
- There are severe penalties in place for drivers caught with the presence of these illegal drugs in their system.



Myths	Facts
• Drugs do not impact on an individual's ability to drive.	• A driver who has recently consumed cannabis, speed or ecstasy may be at risk of having a crash.
• Prescription medication will deliver a positive sample.	• Drivers will be tested for THC (the active component in cannabis), methylamphetamine (speed) and MDMA (ecstasy). The tests will NOT detect prescription or over-the-counter medications.
• The testing process will be invasive.	• Roadside testing will be conducted using a saliva sample. Drivers will provide a sample by placing a saliva testing strip on their tongue. The entire process takes approximately 5 minutes.
• Saliva testing is inaccurate.	• All drug-screening devices are required to meet rigorous standards of accuracy. A positive oral fluid sample result must be confirmed by laboratory testing.
• Passive drug use will result in a positive sample.	• The devices used will detect drugs for several hours after use. A driver with INACTIVE residue in their body will not test positive.
• Testing won't be targeted.	• RANDOM testing will be conducted in "high risk" areas including truck routes and entertainment precincts.

Young drivers

Drugs don't affect my ability to drive – it's just a myth!

- Illegal drugs can affect your driving ability by causing impaired coordination, muscle weakness, impaired reaction time, poor vision, an inability to judge distance and speed, and distortions of time, place and space.
- The active component in cannabis is called THC and it impairs mental function and reduces attention and concentration on the driving task. THC significantly increases crash risk even when there are no extreme outward signs of impairment.
- Speed, ice or crystal meth (methylamphetamines) increase risk taking and aggression.
- MDMA can cause acute changes in cognitive performance and impair the brain's information processing, which in turn can impair driving ability. Basic vehicle control is affected and may result in people taking more risks while driving.

Medical practitioners and drug professionals

Medical professionals will play an important role in raising community understanding about random roadside saliva testing for illegal drugs. In particular, there has been community concern about whether prescription medication will be detected in the roadside saliva testing.

This information sheet provides an overview of random roadside saliva testing in South Australia.

- Random roadside saliva tests will detect the presence of THC (the active component in cannabis), methylamphetamine (also known as speed, ice or crystal meth) and MDMA (ecstasy).
- The saliva tests will not detect the presence of prescription or common over-the-counter medications, such as cold and flu tablets. Saliva tests will only detect THC, methylamphetamine and MDMA – substances that are not legally prescribed in Australia.

Heavy vehicle operators

Truck routes are considered to be high risk and will be targeted by random drug testing. Legislation imposes occupational health and safety responsibility on employers to provide a safe work environment. Employees also have a duty of care to take responsibility for their own safety and not to endanger the lives of others in the workplace.

- Drugs of abuse such as THC, methylamphetamines and MDMA, as well as opiates, stimulants and cocaine, impair driving performance and can contribute to workplace road crashes.

What does this legislation mean for you?



How drugs affect your driving ability

What effects do THC, methylamphetamines and/or MDMA have on driving ability?

- THC (the active component in cannabis) impairs mental function and reduces attention and concentration on the driving task. THC significantly increases crash risk and affects driving even when there are no outward signs of impairment.
- Methylamphetamines (speed) increase risk taking and aggression and are often used by drivers to temporarily allow them to continue to drive even though they are too tired to do so safely.
- MDMA (ecstasy) can lead to impulsive behaviour, making it difficult for a person to maintain attention during complex tasks. Distortion of perception, thinking and memory, impaired tracking ability, disorientation to time and place, and slow reactions are also known performance effects. This in turn can impair driving ability.

How long after consuming illegal drugs can they be detected?

- The devices to be used detect THC (the active component in cannabis) for several hours after use. This can depend on a number of factors, such as the strength of the cannabis and individual metabolism. A driver who may have inactive THC residue in their body from use in previous days/weeks will not be detected.
- Methylamphetamines (speed) and MDMA (ecstasy) may be detected for approximately one day after use. Large doses, other drugs taken at the same time, and differences in individual metabolism may alter the duration of the effects of these drugs.

For more information about random roadside saliva testing for illegal drugs go to www.stopthink.sa.gov.au

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