**Don’t Let the New Cannabis Laws Ruin Your Trip**

**Do NOT travel in or out of Canada with marijuana**

By Dan Donnelly

On October 17, 2018 it will be legal to buy, possess, and use cannabis, better known as marijuana, in Canada. Currently, cannabis use is legal if prescribed for medicinal purposes. Otherwise, until October 17, 2018 it is illegal to buy, possess, or use cannabis. For some Canadians, Bill C-45, the Cannabis Act, is good news. If you are one of the people that will use cannabis on October 17 and afterwards, you should be aware of the laws pertaining to travelling in and out of Canada with cannabis. In a nutshell,

**Taking cannabis in or out of Canada for any reason (personal use or medicinal use) is illegal.**

After October 17, 2018 it will still be illegal to take cannabis or any product containing cannabis over the border. It doesn’t matter that it is legal in Canada. It doesn’t matter that the country (or the state) you are travelling to has legalized or decriminalized cannabis. You cannot take cannabis over the border for any reason including prescribed medicinal use. If you are caught, you will face serious criminal penalties that could result in fines and/or jail time. The Canadian authorities will prosecute you and the authorities in the country that you entered could prosecute you.

If you are out-of-Canada and travelling home, you may not take cannabis or any product containing cannabis into Canada for any reason including prescribed medicinal use. It doesn’t matter that you purchased it legally in the country (or state) you were visiting and are returning to Canada where it is legal to possess and use it.

For more information, the Canadian government has a website [www.Travel.gc.ca/cannabis](http://www.Travel.gc.ca/cannabis) with information and a video, as well as a leaflet called “Don’t Travel Internationally With Cannabis” that can be viewed and ordered online.

The information appears on the Travel Insurance Office Inc. website at [www.travelinsuranceoffice.com](http://www.travelinsuranceoffice.com)

More than 20% of Canadians smoke marijuana. A Forum Research poll in 2015 learned that more than 30% of Canadians say they would smoke marijuana if it were legal. You may have no intention of using cannabis, but maybe someone you know may feel differently. Please let your family and friends know about the laws regarding taking cannabis across the border.

If you have been prescribed cannabis for medicinal use, you probably should not travel. If you consult your doctor, you’re likely to hear one of two things:

1. He may say you must take your cannabis as prescribed. If so, you will not be able to travel without breaking the law.
2. He may say you do not have to take your prescribed cannabis while travelling. If so, your travel insurance policy may be void if you have a claim because most policies require that you take your medication as prescribed. A temporary stoppage of medication for travel purposes is not a considered a change in the prescription. From a medical point of view, you still require medicinal cannabis.

If you do not consult your doctor and travel without taking your medicinal cannabis, you are taking a big financial risk because, if you have a claim, most insurance companies will ask for a copy of your medical file. If they learn that you have a prescription for medicinal cannabis, they are likely to deny your claim.

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