



Just saying “No” to drugs is not enough

Licensee information sheets from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario

The Regulations under the *Liquor Licence Act* state that a liquor licence holder may not permit a person to “have, use, distribute or sell controlled substances in his or her establishment.” The *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* regulates certain dangerous drugs and narcotics (now known as “controlled substances”) such as cocaine and marijuana, among others. Possession of these substances without proper authorization can result in federal charges (this includes the unlawful possession of prescription drugs).

As a liquor licence holder, therefore, you cannot permit illegal drug use or drug dealing on your premises. This applies during the operating hours of your establishment and also when the establishment is closed. Even if you and your staff are not personally involved, you can be held accountable for illegal activities in your establishment and must take reasonable steps to prevent illegal drug use and dealing anywhere in your establishment.

Steps You Can Take

To discourage the presence of illegal drugs, you can create an environment unsuitable for drug users and dealers by taking the following steps:

- Provide proper lighting to avoid dark corners/ areas.
- Have all tables visible to staff and other patrons.
- Employ and educate security staff. Use reputable security staff.
- Place Security in areas of concern (bathroom entrance, side stage doors, entries and exits).
- Refuse entry/service to anyone suspected of participating in the sale or use of illegal drugs on the licensed premises. Eject the individual and contact police.
- Have well-lit and monitored parking areas and outside service areas.
- If you think a member of your staff may be dealing or using drugs on the premises, contact the police for assistance. If necessary, install security cameras to monitor staff/patron activities.
- Create and enforce a strict house policy that clearly states your establishment’s “zero-tolerance” towards illegal drugs.
- Educate your staff on drug awareness. Crime Prevention Officers with your local police service will give presentations on drug identification, trends, etc.

- Watch for gangs as they are often involved in drug use and trafficking. Some gangs identify themselves with coloured bandannas, jackets, boots with coloured laces, tattoos, etc. Suspected gang activity should be reported. *Altercations should be dealt with by police!*
- Check your premises every night after closing for stashed drugs or weapons, especially in washrooms.
- Drug users cluster in washrooms for access to water (needed for mixing heroin) and privacy. Deny them that privacy and they will go elsewhere. All found drugs or weapons should be reported to police.
- Check for hypodermic needles taped under, behind or inside the water cisterns, behind the toilet bowl, or in a false ceiling. When searching, use your eyes – not your hands – to prevent accidental stabbing.

Behaviours To Watch For

Management and employees alike need to be aware of commonly noticed behaviours and methods used by people dealing in and/or using illegal drugs.

These include:

- Making frequent trips in and out of the licensed premises.
- Making frequent trips in and out of the licensed premises with different people.
- Passing match boxes, folded money or folded napkins to others.
- Customers who arrive sober but quickly show signs of impairment inconsistent with their alcohol use. This is often caused by mixing drugs with alcohol. This is an important sign to be aware of, especially with female patrons who may be the victims of a tainted beverage. If you suspect or visually see drink tampering, notify authorities as soon as possible and retain possession of the beverage for testing purposes to treat the victim. Ensure the victim’s safety.
- Customers who continually visit the restroom. Restrooms are common havens for drug dealing and use. Check them regularly if drug activity is suspected, especially if you find syringes, needles, small clear plastic bags, burned matches, bottle caps or other drug paraphernalia on the premises. If syringes or needles are found, they should be reported to the police.

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Medical Marijuana

The *Liquor Licence Act* does not include any provisions or exemptions allowing the use of medicinal marijuana in a licensed establishment by patrons who hold a federal permit allowing them to possess marijuana for medical purposes. Therefore, if a customer uses marijuana in your establishment, you are in breach of the *Liquor Licence Act* and therefore may be subject to a suspension or revocation of your licence. However, whether or not a sanction is imposed against a licence holder for this or any breach of the *Liquor Licence Act* is always at the discretion of the Registrar of Alcohol and Gaming, who looks at all aspects of a case before recommending any type of administrative sanction.

Recognizing Drugs

Cannabis is the name that covers marijuana, hashish, and hash oil. Marijuana looks like chopped plant material ranging from green to light brown and is usually sold in clear plastic packages. It is smoked in the form of hand-rolled cigarettes or in a pipe and has a distinctive smell when burning. Hashish varies in colour from light-brown to near black, and its consistency may be soft or hard. It is often mixed with tobacco and smoked. Hashish oil is a thick oily product which ranges in colour from yellow to nearly black. The oil is spread onto the tip of an ordinary cigarette or onto the papers used for handmade cigarettes, then smoked. Cannabis users usually exhibit slow speech, droopy eyelids, dilated pupils and increased appetite.

Cocaine is usually sold as a white, crystalline powder. Often it is snorted through the nose. Some users inject cocaine or convert it into a smokable form called “crack”, a light brown or beige pellet formed when powdered cocaine is melted in a glass tube with water. Watch for crude crack pipes made from soft drink cans. Paraphernalia associated with the use of cocaine include small spoons, razor blades, mirrors, small bottles of white powder, and plastic/glass pipes or straws.

Heroin is an opiate that usually comes as a white or brownish powder. It is usually dissolved in water and injected under the skin or into a vein or muscle, but it can also be sniffed or smoked.

PCP is often sold in white or coloured chunks or crystals, but can also come in the form of a powder or tablet. Mixed with tobacco, marijuana or dried parsley, it is usually smoked, but it can be swallowed or injected. Although it makes users “high”, it often makes them violent towards themselves and others.

LSD has no colour, odour or taste and is so strong that a dose is too small to see. It is packaged in miniature powder pellets (“microdots”), gelatin chips (“windowpane”) or squares of LSD-soaked paper (“blotter”). LSD is usually swallowed but may also be snorted or injected.

Amphetamines come in crystals, chunks, or glittery powders that are off-white to yellow in colour. Often they have a “fishy” or ammonia-like smell. They can be swallowed, injected, sniffed, or smoked. Crystal is a powder form of methamphetamine that is injected, inhaled, or taken by mouth. Ice and glass are smokable forms of methamphetamine; like crack cocaine, their effect is strong and fast. Crank, another nickname for amphetamines, comes in tablets or capsules.

Ecstasy tablets come in different shapes, sizes and colours, and are often stamped with a logo, such as a butterfly or clover, giving them a candy-like look. The chemical structure and the effects of ecstasy are similar to amphetamine (a stimulant) and to mescaline (a hallucinogen). Ecstasy affects the chemistry of the brain, in particular by releasing a high level of the chemical serotonin, which helps regulate mood, energy level and appetite.

GHB is a popular club drug sometimes called “liquid ecstasy”. In its liquid form, GHB looks like water. It has no smell, and is tasteless or has a slightly salty or solvent taste that can be easily masked. It is usually sold as a liquid in small vials, but is also available as a white powder or capsule. The effects of GHB are similar to the effects of alcohol. At a low dose, users usually feel more sociable, less inhibited and lightheaded. A slightly higher dose intensifies these effects or makes one drowsy and dizzy. A little more may cause nausea and vomiting, and a higher dose can induce a deep coma-like sleep. An overdose can result in difficulty breathing, a lowered heart rate, convulsions and death.

Ketamine is a fast-acting anaesthetic and painkiller used primarily by veterinarians. It is sold in liquid form or as a white powder. The powder is snorted, mixed into drinks or smoked with marijuana or tobacco. The liquid is added to drinks. When taken in lower doses, users may feel sleepy, distracted and withdrawn, find it more difficult to think clearly, feel confused and have a distorted perception of time and body. At higher doses they may babble, not remember who or where they are, stumble if they try to walk, feel their hearts race and find it difficult to breathe. Too high a dose causes loss of consciousness.