

Cannabis and HR! Gummies, suckers, peanut butter cups, dried fruit, chocolate, cookies, rice krispie squares, cheetos, pop, iced tea mix. This might look like a grocery list for a 12 year olds birthday party. (Or your average Friday night in, let's be honest.) But these are actually just *some* of the types of edible cannabis products you will be able to legally purchase come mid-December this year.

While this is great news for those who like to enjoy the effects of cannabis without smoking, this introduces unique challenges for organizations in managing impairment in the workplace. There are two major concerns with the introduction of the new legislative that came into effect October 17th.

Lack of knowledge:

First off, employees and/or employers don't have an understanding of how edibles affect the body. While I'm no Bill Nye, here is a quick science lesson on Cannabis. There are substantial differences in the effects of cannabis on the body when consumed via inhalation vs. ingestion. The onset of the effects of smoking/vaping are immediate and typically dissipate in 1-2 hours. The effects of ingesting cannabis depends largely on the concentration. In general it is delayed anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 hours and can last several hours. Depending on the type of Cannabinoid ingested effects include reduced alertness, impaired concentration and visual function, slowed reaction time, and affected motor skills.

Without this knowledge an employee may think having a THC gummy nightcap is a great way to relax for bed only to wake up for work the next day unknowingly still under the effects of cannabis.

Consumption of edibles is undetectable

The second is the fact that edibles are undetectable through smell. Managers may find themselves feeling suspicious of those homemade cookies Darren has with his afternoon

coffee. Perhaps questioning if the jar of gummy bears on Susans desk are there to satisfy her sugar addiction or something else? But banning office snacks is not the answer. The answer lies within your policies and processes.

This time last year we gave you our [7 tips for preparing your workplace](#) for the legalization of recreational cannabis .

You already have the tools to deal with the impact of these legislative changes. Managing impairment is still managing impairment regardless if the cause is fatigue, alcohol, a medical condition or cannabis.

Review, communicate, educate, train, empower.

Prepared and practical employers will be better able to manage the risks associated with employee cannabis use. To ensure your organization is prepared for the upcoming legislation changes you need to review, communicate, educate, train and empower.

Review your Drug and Alcohol policy to ensure it is up to date and comprehensive, make changes if necessary!

Reinforce your Drug and Alcohol policy by re-communicating it to managers and employees. Use this as an opportunity to educate you team!

Educate employees on how cannabis and edibles affect the body and the risks of impairment in the workplace.

Train your managers on how to recognize and talk to employees who may be impaired or at risk of impairment. If you haven't already, implement a 'Reason to Suspect' policy.

Employees that are better informed will make better decisions. Empower your employees with effectively communicated policies and the right education and training.

