

# International Regulation of Cannabis

## International Laws

Below is a summary of the legality of cannabis in select countries that may be frequented by athletic trainers. This is a sampling of countries and one should always look up the laws of each country, state, and/or region for the most current information to include, but not limited to, prescription, possession, consumption, cultivation, and travel regulations. This is especially important since rules and regulations surrounding cannabis change frequently. This page will be updated as well as information becomes available. See "Travel with Cannabis" document for further guidance on traveling across state and country borders.

### Canada

**Legal:** All forms of cannabis are legal. When you are travelling within Canada, if you meet the minimum age requirement of the province or territory you are in, you may possess up to 30 grams of dried cannabis or the equivalent.

**Illegal:** It is illegal to take cannabis across the Canadian border, whether you are entering or leaving the country. You could be charged with a criminal offense if you try to travel to other countries with any amount of cannabis in your possession. This includes edible cannabis, cannabis topicals and cannabis extracts, as well as products containing CBD. This applies to all countries, whether cannabis is legal there or not.

### Mexico

**Legal:** Legal for possession, consumption, and cultivation with a permit, but not for sale.

On June 28, 2021, the Supreme Court voted 8-3 to decriminalize adult use marijuana completely under Mexican law.

### United Kingdom

**Legal:** Limited medical use has been legal since November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Cannabis-derived medicines are only legal when prescribed by a specialist consultant and GPs are not allowed to prescribe cannabis-derived medicines. NHS guidance states that medical cannabis should only be prescribed when there is clear published evidence of its benefit and other treatment options have been exhausted

**Illegal:** Recreational use is prohibited. A cannabis warning or an on-the-spot fine ("Penalty Notice for Disorder") may be issued for simple possession instead of prosecution.

## Compliance Rules, Organizational Policies, & Drug Testing

### World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

Marijuana is prohibited in-competition by the WADA, and this status applies to all athletes regardless of the state or country laws where they live. All natural and synthetic cannabinoids are prohibited In-

Competition except for Cannabidiol. THC is the only cannabinoid for which there is a urinary threshold, and it is set at 150 ng/mL. There are no threshold limits for any other cannabinoid (natural or synthetic).

### United States Anti-Doping Association (USADA)

The USADA will consider a TUE application for medical marijuana for therapeutic use per the WADA TUE Physician Guidelines for Neuropathic Pain. All TUEs for cannabis or other FDA-approved cannabinoid medications (e.g., Marinol, dronabinol) must meet the criteria set forth in the International Standard for TUEs in order to be approved.

### NCAA

Cannabinoids are on the banned substances list. The THC testing threshold for student-athletes is 35 ng/mL. Click [here](#) for a recent announcement.

### MLB

Effective 2020 the MLB and MLBPA announced the removal of natural cannabinoids (e.g., tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), cannabidiol (CBD) and marijuana) from the list of prohibited Drugs of Abuse. The [Cannabis Use Policy](#) summarizes additional rules and regulations that will apply to all players and Club personnel.

### NBA

The NBA introduced a temporary policy against randomly drug testing players for marijuana amid the COVID-19 pandemic; it is currently not known how long this status will remain in effect.

### NFL

Cannabis was removed from the NFL List of Prohibited Substances in 2020. The pain management committee of the NFL and the NFL Players Association have provided \$1 million in funding for research related to the investigation of alternatives to opiates for pain management, as well as the impact of cannabis or cannabinoids on athletic performance in elite football players.

### NHL

Of the 31 teams in the NHL, 28 play in states or countries where players have access to legal marijuana, whether it is for medicinal or recreational purposes. The NHL drug testing policies sets forth to screen players for illegal drugs, drugs of abuse, or performance enhancing substances. The goal of the testing procedure is not to punish offenders but rather identify those who need help. A positive test for THC flags the player who then receives direct communication from an independent group of physicians and counselors who provide education and access to voluntarily join the League's substance abuse program. The League is not notified of the test result, and the player receives no penalty. While CBD and other phytocannabinoids of emerging popularity and visibility are not prohibited or considered drugs of abuse, the League cautions players from using substances without first ensuring purity as many are of unknown origin.

### NFHS

No mention of cannabis in the NFHS position statement on appearance and performance enhancing drugs and substances. State high school associations dictate rules and policies on the use and testing student-athletes.

## Sources Used to Derive This Information

Canada Laws - <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/campaigns/cannabis/border.html>

TSA - <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring/items/medical-marijuana>

WADA Prohibited Status of Cannabis– <https://www.wada-ama.org/en/content/what-is-prohibited/prohibited-in-competition/cannabinoids>

WADA Cannabidoid Q&A - <https://www.wada-ama.org/en/questions-answers/cannabinoid>

WADA TUE Checklist for Neuropathic Pain - <https://www.wada-ama.org/en/resources/therapeutic-use-exemption-tue/checklist-for-therapeutic-use-exemption-tue-application-8>

USADA - <https://www.usada.org/athletes/substances/marijuana-faq/>

NCAA Banned List - [https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/ssi/substance/2021-22NCAA\\_BannedSubstances.pdf](https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/ssi/substance/2021-22NCAA_BannedSubstances.pdf)

MLB POLICY GOVERNING THE USE, POSSESSION AND DISTRIBUTION OF NATURAL CANNABINOIDS BY PLAYERS AND CLUB PERSONNEL - <https://img.mlbstatic.com/mlb-images/image/upload/mlb/vctw0ozyqngoy1r2ti5.pdf>

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL’S JOINT DRUG PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROGRAM- <https://img.mlbstatic.com/mlb-images/image/upload/mlb/xbrwtupwdmphz1lq3ox6.pdf>

NFL <https://nflpa.com/active-players/drug-policies>

NFL Research Grant - <https://www.nfl.com/playerhealthandsafety/health-and-wellness/medical-research/nfl-nflpa-pain-management-committee-accepting-applications-for-1-million-in-rese>

NHL Drug Testing Policy [https://www.espn.com/nhl/story/\\_/id/26046596/is-nhl-future-marijuana-pro-sports-why-be](https://www.espn.com/nhl/story/_/id/26046596/is-nhl-future-marijuana-pro-sports-why-be)

## Additional Useful Resources

Map of World Cannabis Laws - <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map-of-world-cannabis-laws.svg>

GlobaDro – <https://www.globaldro.com/Home>

TADP - <https://antidoping.itftennis.com/news/305710.aspx>

NFHS Position Statement:

[https://www.nfhs.org/media/1018447/nfhs\\_position\\_statement\\_apeds\\_april\\_2017.pdf](https://www.nfhs.org/media/1018447/nfhs_position_statement_apeds_april_2017.pdf)