

SERVING CANNABIS BEVERAGES RESPONSIBLY

**An Informational Guide for Serving Cannabis Alongside
Alcoholic Drinks.**

Stewardship of the plant for the people.



Brought to you by: Ghislaine Ball, Minnesota Craft Cannabis Guild; Bryan Pickering, USBG - MSP; Tricia Brown, RN; Cory Lake, Lake Group Insurance and Jen Reise, North Star Cannabis Consulting.

Cannabis Is Not Alcohol. Service Is Not the Same.

As cannabis beverages make their way behind the bar and into restaurants, hotels and consumption lounges, the rules of responsible service evolve.

This brochure will help you:

- Serve legally and responsibly
- Recognize signs of over consumption
- Know how to respond in case of emergency
- Understand key cannabis science

Understanding Cannabis Beverage Laws in Minnesota

It's likely that MN will follow 'Gram Shop Laws' - that's the cannabis version of Minnesota's alcohol-related 'Dram Shop Laws'. Until we know one way or another, it's safe practice to assume that the state will hold a business and/or servers liable if a person who was served a cannabis beverage subsequently causes bodily injury or property damage while operating a motor vehicle. Additionally, it is possible for the state to default to the dram shop laws in the event that a person is intoxicated by alcohol and is subsequently served a cannabis product and then causes bodily injury or property damage.

- 21+ to use, purchase, or transport cannabis beverages
- 18+ to serve cannabis beverages
- If a patron causes bodily harm or property damage after cannabis consumption, your establishment and individual staff could be held liable.
- Serving cannabis beverages before or after alcohol (some call it 'Crossfading') may compound effects and risk.
- At this time, it is 'Best Practice' to have guests 'choose a path' and require that they stick to it for their visit.
- **Caveat:** Many people who consume cannabis medicinally are not impaired by consumption.
Yet they are still subject to laws around being 'Under the Influence'



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Responsible Cannabis Beverage Service

Start Low, Go Slow

- Alcohol enters your bloodstream within 10 minutes of consumption. Most cannabis drinks take 30 - 90 minutes to take full effect.
- Start with 2.5mg THC or less for new consumers.
- Encourage new consumers to choose beverages with additional cannabinoids like CBD, CBG, or CBN. They mitigate THC's high and lower the risk of negative reactions.
- Everyone processes cannabinoids differently—effects may appear in 15 minutes, an hour or more, or not at all.
- Understanding responsible cannabis beverage service includes: pacing drinks, offering food and intervening when necessary.
- Event Service: as with alcohol, unless a person is visibly impaired, you can sell/serve two beverages per valid ID at a time.
- Restaurant Service: cannabis beverage service should mirror the establishment's established alcohol service protocol.

ID Checking

- You must be 21 years old to use, purchase, or transport adult use and medical cannabis products.
- You are responsible for checking their ID.

When a Guest Orders:

- Ask: "Have you tried cannabis drinks before?"
- Encourage questions & discussion.
- Encourage guests to check for drug interactions.*
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Check the Label:

- THC/CBD/CBC/etc. content (per serving and total container)
- Number of servings in a container
- Dosage (in mg)
- Terpenes listed
- Type (e.g., live rosin, resin, isolate, full/broad spectrum, nano, etc.)
- Additional ingredients (e.g., caffeine, mushrooms) may compound effects
- Product age (THC beverage potency may degrade after 3 months)

*Cannabis can interact with some commonly prescribed medications. Check for possible interactions before you consume.

Recognizing & Responding to Overconsumption

- If this is a guest's first time consuming a cannabis beverage and they don't feel anything and want another right away. *"Let's give it a little more time. Some folks have a delayed response and once it kicks in, it can be strong. I want to make sure you have a good experience."*
- If they still 'don't feel anything,' that's not uncommon. Everyone digests cannabis differently. Your body may just process edibles more slowly or less efficiently or maybe you process cannabis too efficiently."
- Harm reduction is good hospitality; our role isn't just to serve, it's to support a safe and enjoyable experience for the guest. Knowing that **5-15% of people may not feel edibles or might feel them unpredictably**, helps you guide the guests to make the best decision for them. A rare liver enzyme could be the reason some people fail to experience a high, "ediblocked" after ingesting marijuana products. A gene known as CPY2C9 is behind the enzyme that helps metabolize THC. For some with a rare subtype of that gene, however, the process could essentially be too efficient: metabolizing THC into a waste product before the high-causing metabolite can enter the bloodstream.

Signs of Overconsumption

Occurs more frequently when cannabis is ingested. The experience should dissipate in about 4 to 8 hours.

- Slowed speech and thinking
- Loss of coordination
- Emotional distress
- Anxiety
- Paranoia
- Hallucinations
- Confusion
- Nausea and vomiting
- Resting heart rate over 100 beats per minute.

Offer Food and Hydration

- *As with alcohol, pairing cannabis beverages with food can reduce the intensity of effects*

Refusal of Service and Conflict Management

In MN, bartenders and servers have the legal right to refuse alcohol service to anyone under 21, anyone visibly intoxicated, or anyone exhibiting disruptive behavior.

- At this time it is 'Best Practice' to have guests 'choose either alcohol or cannabis and require that they stick to it for their visit.
- It is not recommended to serve a cannabis beverage to anyone visibly impaired.
- It is not recommended to serve alcohol to someone already consuming cannabis.
 - Alcohol can increase the side effects of cannabis: dizziness, drowsiness, issues with concentrating, thinking, and judgement. It is best to avoid the use of alcohol with cannabis.
- If a guest needs to be cut off, it is best practice to let any fellow front-line workers and managers/supervisors know what's happening. It is also best practice to document the incident as this can reduce liability for the establishment in the event the guest leaves the establishment and causes bodily injury or property damage while driving
- Offer water and food.
- Notify a manager or security if needed.

• Use de-escalation tools:

- Keep your vibe calm
- Avoid confrontation
- Create space

Use firm but respectful language:

“While I’m not comfortable serving you a cannabis product at this moment, I would be happy to get you some water, an NA beverage, or some food.”

“For your safety, I can’t serve you more.”

“We want to make sure you leave here feeling good, not overwhelmed. Let’s take a break and have some water.”

“You’ve reached our serving limit for now. I appreciate your understanding.”

Refusing service to minors

- ID anyone who appears under 35 years old. If they are under 21 per their ID, then we simply say we are not permitted under MN law to sell cannabis products to anyone under 21.
- If the ID indicates that the guest is over 21, but the front-line worker has doubts about the authenticity of the ID, you can ask the guest to state their birthdate and address while still holding the guest's ID. If the guest gets that wrong, or the ID otherwise appears to be fake, it would be best to refuse to sell a cannabis product to that individual.

If Someone Consumes Too Much

Ask if they want medical help. If they cannot respond or symptoms are severe (paranoia, anxiety, emotional distress, confusion, seizures, chest pain, tachycardia - resting heart rate over 100 beats per min. - hallucinations, nausea and vomiting; **Call 911.**

If the guest chooses to 'wait it out':

- Move them to a quiet, low-stimulation area.
- Someone calm and supportive could stay with them.
 - The effects of smoking or vaping typically subside in 1-3 hours.
 - Edibles can take 4-12 hours to fully wear off.
 - Dim the lights, reduce noise, and provide a place to sit or lie down.
 - Let them rest if they feel sleepy.
 - Have them recite the alphabet, and then do it backwards, take as much time as you need.
- Try 'Box Breathing':
 - Inhale 4 seconds → Hold 4 → Exhale 4 → Hold 4
 - Repeat this pattern as necessary
- Have them sing the words to their favorite song.
- Give them a warm, wet towel for their face, neck and pulse points.
- If possible, have them walk around in some fresh air.
- Ask them about subjects that they're interested in, refocus their attention.

• Offer water or juice (no alcohol, caffeine).

- Try breathing techniques: deep, slow breaths.
- Use grounding tools: "Name 5 things you can see..."

"You're safe. This feeling will pass."

"This feeling can be intense, but it's temporary and not uncommon after consuming too much."

"Let's focus on your senses. Look around and tell me five things that you see. Now show me four things you can touch. Three things you can hear, two things you can smell and then take a deep breath, hold it for a moment and feel your feet solidly on the ground."

Repeat as necessary.

If available, offer:

- CBD oil - if taken within a window, CBD oil held under the tongue may mitigate some of the negative effects of consuming too much THC.
- Lemon peel/juice - anecdotally, consuming fresh lemon juice may mitigate some negative effects.
- Chewing peppercorns - peppercorns contain beta-caryophyllene which interacts directly with your Endocannabinoid System. Anecdotally, chewing whole peppercorns may mitigate some negative effects.

Until cannabis-specific laws are clarified, assume:

- Bartenders, servers, and establishments may be responsible for outcomes of cannabis service.
- Serving cannabis before or after alcohol may increase liability.

Train your team. Educate your guests. Serve with intention.

Cannabis Science for Service Workers

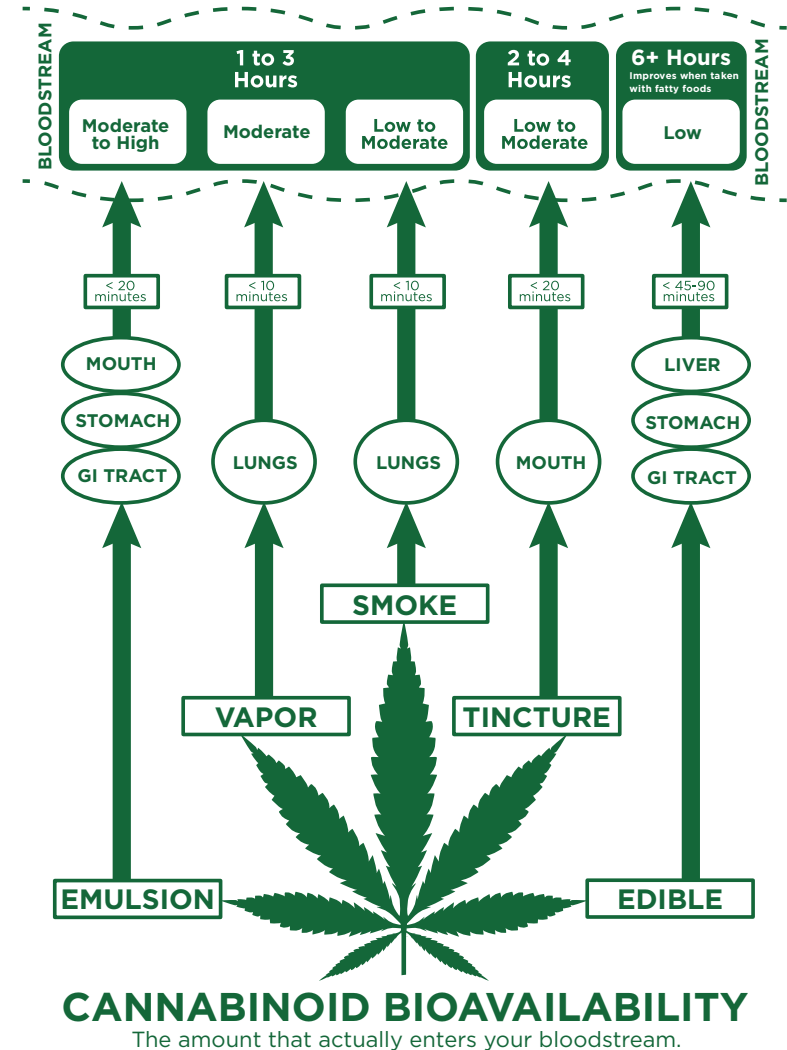
The Endocannabinoid System (ECS)

- Found in all mammals, including humans.
- Regulates functions such as memory, digestion, motor function, immune responses, inflammation, appetite, blood pressure, bone growth, and protection of neural functions.
- Cannabinoids like THC and CBD interact with the ECS to produce physiological effects.
- Everyone's physiology and ECS are different, which means that while most people have a similar experience, our specific experience is unique to us.

The Entourage Effect

- Whole plant and full/broad spectrum plant products (with THC, CBD, minor cannabinoids and terpenes) work synergistically.
- THC, CBD, minor cannabinoids and terpenes interact to create more balanced, enhanced and nuanced effects than isolated compounds alone can produce.
- The whole is more than the sum of it's parts.
- Encourage full or broad-spectrum products for a balanced experience.

Consumption ≠ Combustion Cannabinoid Bioavailability



Approximate values under ideal conditions for general guidance only.
Individual responses to cannabinoids vary widely, with notable differences observed.

This information is for educational and harm reduction purposes only and is not medical advice. The Minnesota Craft Cannabis Guild (MNCCG) and affiliates make no claims about cannabis safety or efficacy. Cannabis is regulated by state and federal law—use responsibly and legally. Always consult a healthcare provider before use, especially if pregnant, nursing, on medication, or with health conditions. MNCCG is not affiliated with the FDA or any government agency. Use cannabinoid products only after expert medical consultation. Allergic reactions and drug interactions are possible. FDA has not evaluated statements or confirmed efficacy. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

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To learn more and check for drug interactions*
go to the Minnesota Craft Cannabis website.

*Cannabis can interact with some commonly perscribed medications.
Check for possible interactions before you consume.