



Cannabidiol (CBD)

Cannabidiol (CBD) is one of at least 113 compounds found in cannabis, and it has gained popularity in recent years for its perceived health benefits. The compound itself has no psychoactive properties.

CBD is extracted from cannabis plants – either from plants with low Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content such as hemp or from plants with higher THC content. The product is usually sold as an oil and is readily available for purchase on the internet and over-the-counter (OTC) in states that have legalized marijuana. Proponents claim a variety of health benefits such as relieving pain and anxiety. It has been confirmed that it effectively treats some rare forms of epilepsy and medications derived from CBD Oil are in development. One of these drugs, Epidiolex, has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as of June 2018 and is classified as a Schedule V drug.

Effective January 13, 2017, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) established “marijuana extracts” as a separate Schedule I controlled substance. CBD is defined as a “marijuana extract” under this rule. Some distributors falsely claim that CBD oil extracted from hemp is not covered by the DEA’s Schedule I Classification, however, DEA rules do not recognize this distinction. They make it clear that CBD products invariably contain other cannabinoids that merit a Schedule I classification.

CBD products always contain some level of THC and therefore use of these products may cause both screen and GC/MS confirmed positive results for the THC metabolite. A study done in Australia verifies this. It has also been pointed out that a person may try to cover their marijuana use by claiming ingestion of CBD oil thinking it is an

acceptable explanation. Drug testing, however, cannot distinguish whether the THC metabolite came from the use of CBD oil or the use of marijuana, therefore CBD oil usage is not a valid excuse for a positive marijuana drug test. Employers should warn their employees not to use CBD products.

Since CBD is a Schedule I drug, its use will disqualify an individual from driving a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) whether or not a drug test result is confirmed positive for the THC metabolite. MROs should alert the employer or other responsible 3rd party if a donor reveals CBD use, even if the test result is not THC positive. A medical examiner should disqualify any examinee that reveals CBD use.

Key Points

- 1) CBD is classified as a Schedule I controlled substance (except Epidiolex which is Schedule V)
- 2) CBD products may cause THC positive drug test results
- 3) CBD use is not a legitimate medical explanation for a THC positive drug test result (except Epidiolex)

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