

Background:

In the District of Columbia, the laws related to the recreational use and possession of marijuana have changed at two milestones: the effective dates of the Marijuana Possession Decriminalization Amendment Act of 2014 on July 17, 2014, and of Initiative 71 on February 26, 2015 (<https://mpdc.dc.gov/marijuana>). Additionally, in September 2018, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) issued policy that MPD officers shall issue a violation citation to make non-custodial arrests for “Public Consumption of Marijuana” whenever arrestees are eligible. When a violation citation (known as a PD Form 61D) is issued, the individual will not be taken into custody at that time, but will report to a police station within 15 days to process the arrest (<https://mpdc.dc.gov/61D>).

Data:

This data includes arrests made by MPD between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023. The 2023 data is as of January 25, 2024. The data represents individuals arrested with a marijuana charge, regardless of whether there was a more serious secondary charge. If an arrestee was charged with multiple marijuana charges, the arrest is only counted once under the more serious charge type (Manufacture/Cultivation > Distribution > Possession with Intent to Distribute > Possession > Public Consumption). The category of “Manufacture or Cultivation” was added in the 2019 data and for future years, but is not utilized in prior years.

MPD collects race and ethnicity data according to the United States Census Bureau standards (<https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>). Hispanic, which was previously categorized under the Race field prior to August 2015, is now captured under Ethnicity. All records prior to August 2015 have been updated to “Unknown (Race), Hispanic (Ethnicity).” Data on race and ethnicity prior to November 9, 2018 was based on officer observation. On and after November 9, 2018, for the purposes of documenting arrested individuals’ gender, race, ethnicity, and date of birth, in cases where an official government identification card is presented by the arrested individual, MPD members may use available information (e.g., sex) from the identification card. Alternatively, MPD members may document a person’s sex, race, or ethnicity based on the member’s observation or, in cases where members are unsure, may select “unknown.”

MPD cannot release exact addresses to the general public unless proof of ownership or subpoena is submitted. The GeoX and GeoY values represent the block location (approximately 232 ft. radius) as of the date of the arrest. Due to the Department’s redistricting efforts in 2012 and 2019, data may not be comparable in some years.

Arrestee age is calculated based on the number of days between the self-reported or verified date of birth (DOB) of the arrestee and the date of the arrest; DOB data may not be accurate if self-reported or if the arrestee refused to provide it.

Due to the sensitive nature of juvenile data and to protect the arrestee’s confidentiality, any arrest records for defendants under the age of 18 have been coded as “NA” for the following fields:

- Arrest Hour
- CCN
- Age
- Offense Location Block GeoX/Y
- Defendant Race
- Defendant Ethnicity
- Defendant Sex
- Arrest Location Block Address
- Arrest Location Block GeoX/Y

This data may not match other marijuana data requests that may have included all law enforcement agencies in the District, or only the most serious charge. Figures are subject to change due to record sealing, expungements, and data quality audits.

Data Dictionary:

Value Display Name	Description	Acceptable Value(s)
Marijuana_Arrest Type	Marijuana charge type; if individual is arrested with multiple marijuana charges, only the most serious charge is displayed	Cultivation; Manufacture; Distribution; Possession with intent to distribute; Possession; Public consumption
Adult/Juvenile	Age group based on calculated age of the arrestee (Arrest Report Date - DOB)	Adult or Juvenile or Unknown
Arrest Year	Arrest Report Year	YYYY
Arrest Date	Arrest Report Date	MM/DD/YYYY
Arrest Hour	Hour of Arrest Report Time	HH
CCN	Anonymized Criminal Complaint Number; multiple arrestees may be associated with the same CCN; same individual may carry different CCN if arrested on different dates	String of characters
Age	Calculated age of the arrestee (Arrest Report Date - DOB)	Number or NA
Offense Location District	Police District of the offense location (i.e., where the crime occurred)	1D - 7D or Unknown
Offense Location PSA	Police Service Area of the offense location (i.e., where the crime occurred)	101 - 708 or Unknown (first digit represents the Police District; each District has different # of PSAs)
Offense Location Block GEOX	Block level GEOX (Maryland State Plane Coordinate) of the offense location - approximately 232 ft. radius	Six digit number (last two digits rounded by 100) or NA
Offense Location Block GEOY	Block level GEOY (Maryland State Plane Coordinate) of the offense location - approximately 232 ft. radius	Six digit number (last two digits rounded by 100) or NA
Defendant PSA	Police Service Area of the arrestee's home address	101 - 708, Unknown, or Out of State (First digit represents the Police District; each District does not have the same # of PSAs)
Defendant District	Police District of the arrestee's home address	1D - 7D, Unknown, or Out of State
Defendant Race	Arrestee's race; based on official government documentation or officer observation, which may or may not be accurate	Asian (A), Black (B), Unknown/Other (U), White (W), or NA
Defendant Ethnicity	Arrestee's ethnicity; based on official government documentation or officer observation, which may or may not be accurate	Hispanic (H), Not-Hispanic (N), Unknown (U), or NA

Value Display Name	Description	Acceptable Value(s)
Defendant Sex	Arrestee's gender; based on official government documentation or officer observation, which may or may not be accurate	Male (M), Female (F), Unknown (U), or NA
Arrest Category	Category grouping for Charge Description (auto-generated from pre-existing category list)	One of 29 arrest categories or null value
Charge Description	DC Code Arrest Charge	One of 5,341 active or inactive arrest categories
Arrest Location Block Address	Block address of the arrest location (i.e., where the arrest occurred)	Block level address; out of state, or NA
Arrest Location Block GeoX	Block level GEOX (Maryland State Plane Coordinate) of the arrest location - approximately 232 ft. radius	Six digit number (last two digits rounded by 100) or NA
Arrest Location Block GeoY	Block level GEOY (Maryland State Plane Coordinate) of the arrest location - approximately 232 ft. radius	Six digit number (last two digits rounded by 100) or NA