

# WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

*A weekly update for residents, visitors, and workers in the District of Columbia*



Friday, February 27, 2015

## KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT DC MARIJUANA LAWS

As of 12:01 am on Thursday, February 26, 2015, the possession of small amounts of marijuana is legal in the District of Columbia - in some circumstances - for adults 21 years of age and older.

**What's no longer a criminal violation?** In November 2014, District voters approved the Legalization of Possession of Minimal Amounts of Marijuana for Personal Use Initiative (commonly known as Initiative 71). The new law becomes effective on February 26, 2015.

As a result, it is legal for a person who is at least 21 years old to:

- Possess two ounces or less of marijuana;
- Transfer one ounce or less of marijuana to another person who is at least 21 years old, so long as there is no payment made or any other type of exchange of goods or services;
- Cultivate within their residence up to six marijuana plants, no more than three of which are mature;
- Possess marijuana-related drug paraphernalia – such as bongs, cigarette rolling papers, and cigar wrappers – that is associated with one ounce or less of marijuana; or
- Use marijuana on private property.

**What is still a criminal violation?** A person can still be arrested for:

- Selling any amount of marijuana to another person;
- Possessing more than two ounces of marijuana;
- Operating a vehicle or boat under the influence of marijuana; or
- Smoking, eating, or drinking marijuana – or holding or carrying a lighted roll of paper or other lighted smoking equipment filled with marijuana – in any public space, such as:
  - o On any street, sidewalk, alley, park, or parking area;
  - o In a vehicle on any street, alley, park, or parking area; or
  - o Any place to which the public is invited.

**Marijuana possession by persons under 21 years of age is not allowed.** Initiative 71 did not change existing law on marijuana possession for anyone under 21 years of age: It is still illegal.

A person under 21 with more than two ounces of marijuana can be arrested.

If an MPD officer sees a person under 21 with up to two ounces of marijuana, it will be seized. However, the person will not be arrested or issued a ticket.

If the person says they are at least 21 years old but cannot prove their age, the person will be issued a warning ticket by the MPD officer. The seized marijuana will be returned if the person brings the warning ticket to the police station in the police district where the seizure occurred (no sooner than 24 hours and no later than 21 days after the seizure) and provides proof of age.

» Get more information and download the MPD's information card at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/marijuana>

» The Mayor's Office has issued a press release that contains additional helpful fact sheets. Read the complete news release and download those fact sheets at:  
<http://mayor.dc.gov/release/bowser-administration-outlines-changes-district-marijuana-laws>

**KNOW THE FACTS**  
About Marijuana in DC

Possession of marijuana is now legal in the District of Columbia for adults 21 & older in some circumstances. Know the facts!

- » If you're 21 & over, you can possess up to 2 ounces of marijuana, grow up to 6 cannabis plants in your home (no more than 3 of which are mature), or give away up to 1 ounce of marijuana to another person that's at least 21 years old.
- » If you're under 21, you cannot possess any amount of marijuana. Any marijuana can be seized by an officer.
- » You can be arrested if you smoke or consume marijuana in public, have more than 2 ounces, or sell any amount of marijuana.
- » Driving while under the influence of marijuana is a dangerous crime and will be prosecuted.
- » Under federal law, federal law enforcement officers may arrest anyone in the District for possession of any amount of marijuana.
- » To learn more, please visit [www.mpdc.dc.gov/marijuana](http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/marijuana).

**KNOW THE FACTS**  
About Marijuana in DC

You shouldn't use marijuana just because local laws have changed.

- » Some studies indicate that marijuana use may have serious long-term effects, especially when used by children or teens.
- » Marijuana use while pregnant may pose health risks to the fetus.
- » Operating a vehicle or heavy machinery after using marijuana may lead to serious injury and arrest.
- » To find out about substance use disorder prevention and treatment services, please call the **DC Department of Behavioral Health Access Helpline** at 1-888-793-4357 or visit [dbh.dc.gov](http://dbh.dc.gov)
- » If your marijuana was seized by an MPD officer because you didn't provide proof of age, you can retrieve the marijuana by bringing the ticket issued by the officer and proof of your age to the police station in the district where the seizure occurred, no sooner than 24 hours & no later than 21 days after it was seized.

### Impact on authorized medical marijuana users.

A person who has been issued a Medical Marijuana Card by the District Department of Health may continue to possess up to two ounces of medical marijuana per month. However, the use of medical marijuana in public remains a criminal offense and can result in arrest.

### Enforcement by federal law enforcement agencies.

Although the District of Columbia has decriminalized possession of up to two ounces of marijuana for persons over the age of 21, federal law continues to prohibit the possession or use of any amount of marijuana. As a result, federal law enforcement officers may arrest anyone in the District of Columbia for possession or use of any amount of marijuana as a violation of federal law. For example, the U.S. Park Police can arrest a person for possessing or using any marijuana on the National Mall, Rock Creek Park, or any other National Park Service land.

## EIGHTEEN NEW OFFICERS, NINE NEW RESERVE CORPS MEMBERS HITTING THE STREETS OF DC

Patrols in DC neighborhoods are being boosted by the addition of 18 officers who were sworn in during a graduation ceremony on Friday, February 27, 2015, at the Metropolitan Police Academy in Southwest DC.

Awards presented during the ceremony recognized the following new members' accomplishments: **Officer Jonathan Panzarella** (Academic Training Award, Firearms Training Award, Vehicle Skills Award); **Officer Melissa Maroney** (Physical Skills Award); and **Officer Xavier Rathlev** (Physical Skills Award).

The new officers all completed approximately 28 weeks of training at the police academy, which includes a full program of physical, classroom, and firearms training to prepare them for the challenges of being a police officer. The subjects covered include laws of arrest, search and seizure, criminal law, traffic regulations, human relations, community policing, and ethics. In addition, recruit officers receive skills training in firearms, operation of emergency police vehicles, self-defense, advanced first aid, and much more.

Additionally, the MPD welcomed nine new members to the MPD's volunteer Reserve Corps. Reserve police officers contribute in almost every capacity within the Metropolitan Police Department. When they work on district patrols, they handle calls for services, make arrests, and ensure the safety of the Washington DC community. Reserve Corps members also participate in numerous special events and details throughout the year. During 2014, the Reserve Corps contributed over 38,723 hours of service to the department. This service contribution is a savings of over \$1,498,193 to the department.

The following Reserve Corps members were recognized for their accomplishments at the ceremony: **Officer Alexander Fischhoff** (Academic Training Award); **Officer Jan Sabo** (Vehicle Skills Award); and **Officer Jessica Lagomarsino** (Physical Skills Award).

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is focused on building a crime-fighting partnership with the community, and developing our own promise and potential as a department. Police work requires a certain type of individual — one who has strong interpersonal skills and the motivation to work with our partners to help build strong, safe and healthy communities throughout the District of Columbia.



- » For more information on becoming a police officer in the MPD visit the police recruiting website at: <http://dcpolicejobs.dc.gov>
- » The MPD is looking for volunteers to join the MPD's Reserve Corps, which provides qualified civic-minded individuals with the opportunity to assist the MPD in carrying out its policing responsibilities. Details on the Reserve Corps and other volunteer programs are available at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/page/volunteer-opportunities-mpdc>

### Information, ideas, or comments about this service?

Send an e-mail to **KAYLIN CASTELLI**, Manager of Internet Communications, at [kaylin.castelli@dc.gov](mailto:kaylin.castelli@dc.gov)

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