

# Dover AFB Warns on Smart Choices as Delaware Laws Shift

## Delaware's Cannabis Legalization: What Has Changed Over the Years?

In April 2023, Delaware became the 22nd state to legalize marijuana for recreational use, allowing adults 21 and older to possess and consume cannabis legally. Nearly two years later, however, the legal sale of marijuana remains restricted to medical dispensaries and registered patients under the Delaware Medical Marijuana Program. Despite this limitation, new legislation is paving the way for the widespread sale of marijuana products across the state.

## Dover AFB's DDRP: A Mission of Detection, Deterrence, and Education

As the legal landscape shifts, the Dover Air Force Base Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP) remains steadfast in its mission to detect, deter, and educate service members on the risks and regulations surrounding drug use. The three-member DDRP team is responsible for administering drug tests to all uniformed personnel at Dover AFB, including those from tenant units such as the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations, the Joint Personal Effects Depot, and the Air Force Medical Examiner System.

Additionally, DDRP conducts periodic drug tests on specific civilian personnel and pre-employment screenings for newly hired civilian staff. Each month, between 270 and 315 drug tests are conducted to ensure compliance with military regulations.

## Engaging the Community: DDRP's Commitment to Outreach Initiatives

Beyond drug testing, DDRP plays a vital role in educating and supporting the Dover AFB community. The team actively participates in base-wide outreach programs, offering guidance to service members, their families, and the broader military community.

To reinforce their message, the DDRP staff conducts regular briefings for new Airmen on the military's drug policies. They also engage with the local community through educational visits, such as their recent visit to Major George S. Welch Elementary School to teach students about substance abuse.

In addition, DDRP has participated in interactive events like the annual Halloween Trunk or Treat, as well as a Movie on the Lawn event specifically designed for teenagers. By making substance abuse awareness an integral part of community engagement, DDRP aims to create open conversations about the challenges and stressors that may lead individuals to drug use.

## Military Rules Remain Unchanged: Strict Prohibition of Marijuana Use

Despite Delaware's legalization of recreational marijuana, strict federal regulations remain in place for service members and Department of Defense (DoD) civilians. The use, possession, or distribution of marijuana products—including flower, edibles, vapes, tinctures, capsules, and other concentrates—is strictly prohibited for all military personnel. These restrictions extend to federal property, including base housing.

As the commercial sale of cannabis products becomes more common across Delaware, service members must remain vigilant about what they purchase and consume. Many marijuana-infused products come with warning labels, but these can be easily overlooked. Any trace of marijuana use detected in a drug test can lead to severe consequences, including disciplinary action for military personnel and termination for civilian employees.

### **Maintaining Awareness in a Changing Legal Landscape**

As marijuana laws continue to evolve in Delaware, Dover AFB's DDRP remains committed to upholding military standards and educating service members on the risks of drug use. While legal cannabis products will soon be widely available in commercial spaces, the military's stance on marijuana remains unchanged. DDRP's ongoing efforts to promote awareness and responsible decision-making will be crucial in ensuring compliance and safeguarding the well-being of the Dover AFB community.

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