

Maryland Police Flooded with Volunteers for Cannabis DUI Training

Maryland Police Get ‘Overwhelming’ Number of Volunteers to Smoke Cannabis and Eat Free Lunch at DUI Training

OCEAN CITY, Md. – What started as a local police training initiative quickly turned into a viral sensation this week after the Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) announced it was seeking volunteers to smoke marijuana and drive in a controlled setting to help officers recognize signs of cannabis impairment. Within hours, the department said it was inundated with responses—far more than it could handle.

Just seven hours after posting the call for volunteers on Facebook, OCPD issued an update announcing that it had closed applications due to the “overwhelming” number of people eager to take part. The program, part of an annual Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) Zero Deaths DUI Conference, will pair participants who consume cannabis with law enforcement trainees learning to detect and evaluate impairment levels in a safe and supervised environment.

A Controlled Cannabis Exercise And a Free Lunch

In its original post, OCPD explained that it was partnering with Cannabis Green Lab, an educational group specializing in impairment recognition, to recruit 12 to 14 adult volunteers. Those selected will smoke their own cannabis in a controlled environment before participating in driving simulations and officer evaluations.

“The Green Lab helps both officers and participants better understand the effects and levels of impairment caused by cannabis, all in a safe, controlled setting,” OCPD wrote.

To sweeten the deal, volunteers will also receive a free lunch courtesy of the MHSO, part of an incentive program designed to encourage public participation in officer training exercises. The offer, as it turns out, proved to be far more enticing than expected.

“We had no idea the response would be this strong,” one OCPD spokesperson noted informally in follow-up comments shared online. “People were genuinely excited to help—and maybe also for the lunch.”

Volunteers Bring Their Own Cannabis

Although OCPD will oversee the training, participants are required to bring their own cannabis for the exercise, as Maryland law prohibits police departments from distributing marijuana—even for research or training purposes.

Once volunteers have consumed their cannabis, officers will conduct sobriety tests and driving assessments designed to identify behavioral and physiological markers of impairment. The exercise aims to improve accuracy in cannabis-specific DUI enforcement, a growing priority for police nationwide as legalization

expands.

Because driving while impaired remains illegal under Maryland law, OCPD has arranged for shuttle services to transport volunteers after the training session to ensure safety and compliance.

“We’ll have about 40 student officers participating, so it’s a great way to help train the next generation of law enforcement safely and responsibly,” the department said.

Cannabis and Law Enforcement: A Changing Relationship

The overwhelming volunteer response reflects the normalization of cannabis since Maryland’s adult-use legalization took effect in July 2023. What might once have seemed like a fringe exercise has instead drawn enthusiastic interest from residents eager to participate in the evolving relationship between public safety and cannabis policy.

Earlier this year, Gov. Wes Moore (D) allowed a bill to take effect that bars police from using the smell or mere possession of cannabis as probable cause for a search—a key step in aligning enforcement with legalization principles. The measure has reshaped day-to-day policing in Maryland, forcing departments to retrain officers on updated search and seizure protocols.

Meanwhile, police agencies are also reassessing hiring standards related to marijuana. Officials in Montgomery County, the state’s most populous jurisdiction, recently announced plans to loosen cannabis use restrictions for recruits to address ongoing staffing shortages. The move underscores a broader effort to modernize law enforcement practices as public opinion and laws surrounding marijuana continue to evolve.

Cannabis Training Gains Traction Nationwide

Ocean City’s “Green Lab” event mirrors similar programs in other U.S. states that have legalized cannabis. These training sessions give officers firsthand exposure to the varying effects of marijuana on users’ reflexes, coordination, and cognitive processing.

Traditional sobriety testing methods, such as field coordination tests or breathalyzer alternatives, can be inconsistent when applied to cannabis. Unlike alcohol, THC levels in the bloodstream don’t correlate directly to impairment, making education and observation critical tools for accurate DUI enforcement.

Programs like Maryland’s help bridge that gap, allowing officers to interact directly with participants under supervision and learn how different consumption methods—such as smoking, vaping, or edibles—affect behavior in distinct ways.

As cannabis policy reform continues to spread, law enforcement agencies across the country are investing in similar real-world training exercises to improve both public safety outcomes and community trust.

A Viral Example of Cannabis Culture in Transition

For many residents, OCPD’s volunteer call was equal parts curiosity, humor, and civic engagement. Social media users flooded the department’s Facebook page with comments ranging from jokes about “dream jobs” to expressions of appreciation for the agency’s educational approach.

While the attention may have exceeded expectations, it also highlights shifting public attitudes toward cannabis once a taboo topic, now an area of legitimate public policy and science-based training.

As Gov. Moore recently joked in a speech, while he's proud of the record-setting votes he received in his 2022 election, "there was one thing that beat me on the ballot: marijuana legalization."

That cultural shift was on full display in Ocean City this week, where dozens perhaps hundreds of residents rushed to volunteer not only for the chance to smoke cannabis in a police-run experiment, but also to contribute to the safe evolution of post legalization enforcement.

For the OCPD, the takeaway is clear: Marylanders are not just ready for legalization, they're ready to help make it work.

Email: info@cannabisriskmanager.com | Phone: +415-226-4060

© Copyright 2025 Cannabis Risk Manager. All Rights Reserved