

A new portable device to detect marijuana use almost right away

December 3 2015, by Bob Yirka



A dried flower bud of the Cannabis plant. Credit: Public Domain

(Phys.org)—California based Hound Labs Inc. is [claiming](#) to have made a breakthrough in the rush to develop a portable device capable of detecting THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, in the breath of

someone that has recently smoked a substance containing the chemical. They claim also that their device will soon be small enough for use by law enforcement to remove impaired drivers from the road.

Several states in the U.S. have legalized recreational marijuana use, and even more have allowed it for medicinal use. This trend has [law enforcement](#) on edge as there is currently no roadside test that can detect THC use by a driver in real time—instead, if such use is suspected, police officers must take blood or [urine samples](#) that can take days to deliver an answer—that makes it difficult to arrest a driver on the spot, which means in some cases, letting them go to continue driving under the influence. Making things even more challenging is that not enough research has been done by scientists to find out how much THC in the body causes impaired driving—states have set different levels, and some have instituted a zero-level tolerance policy.

In this new announcement, Hound Labs claims it has developed a device that is capable of detecting minute levels (below 500 picograms) of THC in the breath, which the company also claims is the only way to differentiate between heavy marijuana users who maintain high levels of THC in their bodies even hours or days after use, and those who have recently smoked it, in whatever form. Mike Lynn CEO and co-founder of the company is a practicing emergency medicine physician who has presumably witnessed the tragic consequences of people driving after smoking the drug and is looking to put a stop to it.

As part of their announcement, Hound Labs says that it is working with scientists from academic institutions, [law enforcement agencies](#) and other researchers and expects to have a product small enough for a police officer to carry and use by the end of next year. They note also that the device will also work as an alcohol breathalyzer and should cost approximately the same as current breathalyzers.

More information: houndlabs.com/science/

© 2015 Phys.org

Citation: A new portable device to detect marijuana use almost right away (2015, December 3)
retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-12-portable-device-marijuana.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.