

LEGAL WEED 101

Know the law before you light up BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN

"Legalize it ..." Peter Tosh sang in 1976 and, nearly 40 years later, Oregon did. Thanks to the passing of Measure 91, all you covert recreational puffers can, as of July 1, take a deep breath and partake legally of recreational marijuana.

"If you decide to use, use responsibly," says Sgt. Carrie Carver of the Lane County Sheriff's Office, adding that people should "become familiar with the laws so you can remain within the law."

Carver says that, before Measure 91, recreational pot use wasn't much of an enforcement issue. "We don't proactively seek marijuana violations currently due to staffing," she says. "Our patrol services are largely used to respond to person crimes and in-progress crimes."

Don't get too cocky; weed can still get you in trouble in Oregon. Although aspects of the law are still being determined in the Oregon Legislature, here's a legal weed primer to ensure you inhale on the right side of the law.

Who can partake?

Just because you can die for your country doesn't mean you can get stoned in Oregon. Like alcohol, you must be over 21, according to Measure 91. Carver says users also need to make sure the youngsters stay safe. "This is especially true when it comes to the safety of children with regards to accidental consumption," she says.

Oregon is figuring out ways to ensure pot products are not marketed to appeal to kids, without also stepping on free-speech rights, according to Tom Towslee, spokesman for the Oregon Liquor Control Commission's (OLCC) "What's Legal: Educate Before You Recreate" campaign. The OLCC has authority to tax, license and regulate recreational marijuana that is grown, sold or processed for commercial purposes.

Towslee echoes Carver's sentiment about protecting kids, pointing out that while there is nothing in Measure 91 saying a person can't partake around children, users share a level of personal responsibility.

Where can I smoke?

Even before weed went legal you could smell that

skunky scent on the streets of Eugene, but these days you still can't run around with a fatty blunt, nor can you consume pot brownies in public. According to the OLCC, you must consume in the privacy of your own home or on private property.

You can't inhale or ingest your weed in a "public place," which Measure 91 defines as "a place to which the

sell weed until 2016. Three cheers for the sharing economy! According to the OLCC, "Starting July 1, adults 21 and older can share or give away recreational marijuana, or receive it as a gift." This goes for marijuana edibles too, which are legal to make at home.

So just where do you get it? Towslee calls this the "immaculate conception" part of the bill, but he says over the course of talking to people about legal recreational marijuana around the state, the OLCC learned Oregonians are "extremely resourceful."

If you don't have a plethora of friends sharing their stash, you can also grow your own — once you miraculously procure some seeds or clones. OLCC says you can grow four plants per residence (and that's not per person but per residence), possess up to 8 ounces of usable marijuana (dried marijuana flowers or leaves that are ready to smoke) in your home and carry up to 1 ounce in public. In other words, you can walk around with weed in public; you just can't consume it.

Towslee says that pot stores are likely to open in the third quarter of 2016. That's when those of us over 21 who lack the green thumb can buy weed.

I have a green thumb, so can I grow pot in my garden?

Technically, you can grow four plants in your garden, so long as the public can't see it. Under Measure 91 you can't grow, store, process or keep marijuana where it can be seen with "normal unaided vision from a public place."

Towslee also says that it's prohibited to grow recreational pot within 1,000 feet of a school.

Can I travel with my stash?

Taking your weed across state lines — even to Washington, where it's already legal — is a federal offense. Word is, Idaho is getting a little paranoid about sharing a border with the weedier states of Oregon and Washington, so use a little extra caution if you road trip across the spud state, as your Oregon license plate screams, "Pull me over, Idaho, I'm stoned!"

And on that note, pot might be legal here in Oregon, but it's illegal to drive under the influence.

What is the most important thing that pot smokers should know about the change in Oregon law? "The answer to this depends on what your intended use of marijuana will be, if any," Carver of the Lane County Sheriff's Office says, "but safety is our number one priority."

Have fun, Oregon stoners, but stay safe. To keep up with the changes in how Measure 91 is being implemented by the Legislature, go to the OLCC's FAQ at wkly.ws/200 and check out whatslegaloregon.com. ■



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general public has access," including but not limited to hallways, lobbies, schools, amusement parks and public transportation.

So, no, you can't light up in the back of an LTD bus, and if you can't smoke tobacco in your hotel room, you can't smoke pot there either. "No smoking is no smoking," Towslee says.

I'm of age, so where can I score weed?

You can get stoned as of July 1, but you can't buy or

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