

Legalization Of Cannabis In Canada And Vessel Operation

October 18, 2018

With the coming into force of the Cannabis Act and An Act to amend the Criminal Code (Bills C-45 and C-46, respectively), Canada has now become the second country in the world to legalize recreational cannabis. Further to this development, Transport Canada has issued a Ship Safety Bulletin, "[Legalization of cannabis in Canada and vessel operation - SSB No.: 12/2018](#)" (RDIMS No.: 14523388). This bulletin advises authorized representatives and seafarers of their responsibility to operate vessels safely, and as a practical tip, highlights the laws and policies below:

- **Under s. 253(1) of the Criminal Code**, you may not operate, assist in the operation of, or have the care or control of a vessel while impaired. This applies whether or not the vessel is moving.
- **Under s. 14 of the Safe Working Practices Regulations**, "no person shall be permitted in any working area whose ability to work is, in the opinion of the person in charge of the area, impaired by alcohol or a drug". The term "working area" includes anywhere work is being done on board a ship, and applies to anyone working on a ship in Canada or on any Canadian ship outside Canada.
- **Under the newly amended Non-Smokers' Health Act**, smoking or vaping cannabis in the workplace is prohibited.
- **Carrying any cannabis or cannabis products across Canada's borders will remain a serious criminal offence**, even if the cannabis is for medical purposes.
- When considering whether to issue a marine medical certificate to seafarers, Transport Canada and marine medical examiners will consider consumption of cannabis in their determinations.

BLG's maritime law experts look forward to answering questions or queries on these or other points. Feel free to reach out to a member of our [Maritime Law Group](#) at admiralty@blg.com.

By

[Robin Squires](#), [Hannibal El-Mohtar](#)

Expertise

[Insurance Claim Defence](#), [Shipping](#), [Cannabis & Psychedelics](#)

BLG | Canada's Law Firm

As the largest, truly full-service Canadian law firm, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) delivers practical legal advice for domestic and international clients across more practices and industries than any Canadian firm. With over 725 lawyers, intellectual property agents and other professionals, BLG serves the legal needs of businesses and institutions across Canada and beyond – from M&A and capital markets, to disputes, financing, and trademark & patent registration.

blg.com

BLG Offices

Calgary

Centennial Place, East Tower
520 3rd Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB, Canada
T2P 0R3

T 403.232.9500
F 403.266.1395

Ottawa

World Exchange Plaza
100 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON, Canada
K1P 1J9

T 613.237.5160
F 613.230.8842

Vancouver

1200 Waterfront Centre
200 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC, Canada
V7X 1T2

T 604.687.5744
F 604.687.1415

Montréal

1000 De La Gauchetière Street West
Suite 900
Montréal, QC, Canada
H3B 5H4

T 514.954.2555
F 514.879.9015

Toronto

Bay Adelaide Centre, East Tower
22 Adelaide Street West
Toronto, ON, Canada
M5H 4E3

T 416.367.6000
F 416.367.6749

The information contained herein is of a general nature and is not intended to constitute legal advice, a complete statement of the law, or an opinion on any subject. No one should act upon it or refrain from acting without a thorough examination of the law after the facts of a specific situation are considered. You are urged to consult your legal adviser in cases of specific questions or concerns. BLG does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy, currency or completeness of this publication. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior written permission of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. If this publication was sent to you by BLG and you do not wish to receive further publications from BLG, you may ask to remove your contact information from our mailing lists by emailing unsubscribe@blg.com or manage your subscription preferences at blg.com/MyPreferences. If you feel you have received this message in error please contact communications@blg.com. BLG's privacy policy for publications may be found at blg.com/en/privacy.

© 2025 Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. Borden Ladner Gervais LLP is an Ontario Limited Liability Partnership.