

TOP STORY EDITOR'S PICK

More than half of New Jerseyans have smelled marijuana in public, poll finds

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A majority of New Jersey adults say they have smelled marijuana in public spaces more than a year after it became legal in the state, according to a poll by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University released Wednesday.

Very few New Jerseyans said they were bothered by the smell, according to the poll. Fifty-seven percent of the nearly 600 New Jersey adults surveyed reported smelling marijuana in public spaces. Thirty-two percent said they smell marijuana in public rarely, and 9% said they have never smelled marijuana in public settings.

Nineteen percent of people surveyed said it bothered them greatly, and 28% said it bothered them slightly.

“Not much thought was given to the issue of the smell of marijuana becoming part of the public landscape in New Jersey,” said John Froonjian, director of the Hughes Center. “There are hardly any places to legally consume these products, so people are lighting up in parks, at festivals, in parking lots and on the street.”

The scent of weed has infiltrated some residents’ homes, respondents said. About 29% of the people surveyed have caught a whiff coming from a neighboring house or apartment often or sometimes, while 21% said they rarely smell it at home and 49% said they never do.

Nearly one-third of respondents said the right to smoke legal weed in your own home should take precedence, while 16% said not having to smell it from neighbors is more important.

When it comes to cannabis use and driving, 39% said they know someone who has driven while high on marijuana and 56% said they do not. But fewer residents consider driving under the influence of weed to be extremely dangerous (51%), compared with 90% who said driving drunk is extremely dangerous. Thirty-six percent said driving while high is somewhat dangerous, while 9% said the same of driving under the influence of alcohol.

Answers on nearly every measure differed depending on whether a resident consumes cannabis products. Those who have within the past year were less bothered by the smell of weed and more likely to advocate for residents' right to smoke at home, research associate Alyssa Maurice said.

By Samantha Hildebrandt
