



GANJA:

KNOW THE FACTS

KNOW HOW TO ACT

Ganja Use in Jamaica

- Prevalence of ganja use among 15-74 years is 16% (JHLS 2008)
- Ganja was the main drug of impact for clients in treatment centres (OAS\CICAD\NCDA 2013)
- 20% of adolescents used ganja at some point in their lives (NSS 2013)
- 50% of students reported that it is was easily accessible; available near their school (NSS 2013)
- 95% of adolescent referrals to NCDA are for ganja use
- Age of initiation (NSS 2013)
 - 2006 – 12.9
 - 2013 – 13.3



WHAT IS Ganja?

Ganja is a green, brown, or gray mix of dried, crumbled leaves from the CANNABIS SATIVIA or Cannabis Indica plant.



It is also known by over 200 other names in many different parts of the world (marijuana, weed etc)

THC (*tetrahyrocannabinol*) is the psychoactive ingredient of ganja

Possession of Ganja [Under 2oz]

- Cannot get you arrested, charged and tried in court
- Will not result in a criminal record
- May be issued a ticket, similar to a traffic ticket for payment of \$500.00 within 30 days
- A person under 18yrs or over 18yrs and who appears to be dependent on ganja will be referred for treatment to the NCDA [in addition to having to pay the ticket]



Background

- The Dangerous Drugs Act (DDA) of 1948 is the law which addresses all illegal substances in Jamaica.
- This law stated that it was ¹²illegal and it was a crime to sell, cultivate, transport, possess or use Ganja. It was ¹³so a crime and against the law to be found in possession of any pipes or utensils associated with the ganja use.
- **Amendments to the DDA**
 - Passed into Law by House of Representatives - February 24, 2015
 - Took effect with Governor General sign off - April 13, 2015



WHAT'S NEW ...

The new law decriminalizes the **possession** of 2oz or less of Ganja and makes it an offence for which a ticket is issued rather than being arrested and brought before the Court. This does not attract a criminal record

- Provisions are made for:
 - Use of ganja for medical or therapeutic purposes as recommended or prescribed by a registered/approved medical professional
 - Scientific research by a tertiary institution or company, approved by relevant authority
 - Use for religious purposes as a sacrament in adherence to the Rastafarian Faith
 - Use at events primarily for the purpose of celebrating or in observance of Rastafarian faith
 - Home growing (up to 5 plants per household)



Possession of Ganja [Over 2oz]

- Remains a criminal offence to be in possession of over 2 ounces of ganja
- Offenders can be arrested, charged, tried in court and, if found guilty, sentenced to a fine or to imprisonment or both
- The conviction would also be recorded on that person's criminal record



Possession of Ganja [exceptions]

- Possession of more than 2 oz. of Ganja is permitted in the following circumstances:
 - For religious purposes as a sacrament in adherence to the Rastafarian faith
 - For medical or therapeutic purposes as recommended or prescribed by a registered/approved medical professional
 - For scientific research by a tertiary institution or company, approved by relevant authority
 - Five plants for home growing



Smoking of Ganja

- Smoking is not permitted in public places or within 5 meters of a public place
- A public place includes:
 - Workplace
 - Sidewalk
 - Bus Stop
 - Restaurants /Supermarkets
 - Schools
 - Hospitals /Pharmacies
 - Parks



Smoking of Ganja

- A person who smokes in public and has in his or her possession 2oz or less of ganja cannot be arrested or detained. However, the police may issue a ticket to that person.
- Smoking of ganja at privately occupied residences is not an offence but possession limits should be maintained.
- Smoking of ganja will be legally permitted in places that are licensed for the smoking of ganja for medical or therapeutic purposes.
- Rastafarians will also be permitted to smoke ganja for sacramental purposes in locations registered as places of Rastafarian worship.



What if I don't pay my Ganja ticket?

- If a ticket is not paid , persons will have to attend Petty Sessions court, and may be ordered to do community service, or pay a fine of \$2,000.
- A conviction for failing to pay a ticket will also be recorded on the offender's criminal record



Importation of Ganja

- Persons can import Ganja or therapeutic products derived from or containing ganja in the following cases:
 - Suffering from a chronic illness that a medical practitioner has recommended use for therapeutic purposes
 - An Institution /Company or third party involved in scientific research on the plant and licensed by the Cannabis Licensing Authority



Cultivation of Ganja

- Ganja can be cultivated by Householders, Rastafarians and Researchers
 - Each household is allowed to legally grow no more than five ganja plants on its premises.
 - An accredited tertiary institution or other body approved by the SRC may apply for authorization to cultivate ganja in furtherance of scientific research, on lands approved for that cultivation.
 - Persons who adhere to the Rastafarian faith can receive authorization to cultivate ganja for religious purposes as a sacrament



Special Permits

- Rastafarians that are promoting or sponsoring an event may apply for a special exempt permit.
- The permit will be considered for events with the **primary** purpose of the celebration or observance of the Rastafarian faith.
- Where an event is declared exempt, persons who attend the event will not be liable to be arrested, detained or prosecuted for smoking ganja or possession of ganja at the event, or transporting ganja to the event, as long as they have complied with the amounts and conditions specified in the order declaring it an exempt event.



Visitors

- Visitors may apply to the MINISTRY OF HEALTH for a permit to allow them to lawfully purchase and possess up to 2 ounces of ganja at a time, for medical or therapeutic purposes.
- To obtain this permit, visitors will need to produce evidence that their use of ganja has been recommended or prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner in the country where they live.
- Alternatively, they can sign a voluntary declaration to confirm this.



Penalties

- The fines in the DDA have been significantly increased for export, cultivation, possession, selling and trafficking of illegal drugs.



Thank You

- *For more information please call or text 564-HELP*

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