



Marijuana Involved Deaths

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Tron Dohse



Daniel Juarez



Levy Thamba Pongi



Gemma Moss



John O'Brien



Kristine Kirk

HAS MARIJUANA BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY DEATHS? Yes.

After alcohol, marijuana is the most common substance involved in traffic fatalities.¹ Marijuana also contributes to other preventable deaths. Examples are provided below.²

ACCIDENTAL DEATH: In 2012 **Tron Dohse, 26**, returned home from a Colorado Rockies game and apparently lost his keys. He tried to reach his apartment balcony by climbing the outside of the building, but fell to his death. The autopsy ruled his death an accident and the level of THC (the ingredient in marijuana that causes intoxication) in his blood was 27.3 nanograms (Colorado's legal limit is 5 nanograms). No other drugs or alcohol were in his system.^{2,3,4}

DEATH AFTER SMOKING MARIJUANA: In 2012 **Daniel Juarez, 18**, a high school student and soccer player from Brighton Colorado died after stabbing himself 20 times. After smoking marijuana, Juarez reportedly became wild, stripped off his clothes, grabbed a knife and stabbed himself repeatedly. The autopsy revealed 38.2 nanograms of THC in his blood at the time of his death. Tests for other drugs were negative. Juarez's death was listed as suicide with "marijuana intoxication" as a significant condition.^{2,3,4}

DEATH AFTER EATING MARIJUANA EDIBLES: In 2014 **Levy Thamba Pongi, 19**, a Wyoming college student visiting Colorado with friends, jumped to his death from a hotel balcony after eating a marijuana cookie. Pongi had a single slice of the cookie, but when he didn't feel anything he ate the remainder of the cookie all at once. He reportedly became agitated and erratic before jumping to his death. He had 7.2 nanograms of THC in his blood. The Denver coroner listed "marijuana intoxication" as a significant condition contributing to his death.^{2,3,4,5,6}

In 2015 **Luke Goodman, 22**, a college graduate vacationing with family at Colorado's Keystone Resort bought marijuana edible candies. He ate two of the peach candies and when nothing happened, he ate some more. It is estimated he consumed four or five candies, and later became agitated and incoherent. When family members left the condo, he retrieved a gun and shot himself. Toxicology results show Goodman had 3.1 nanograms of THC in his blood.^{2,3,4,7}



Luke Goodman

MARIJUANA OVERDOSE: Although overdosing on marijuana is very rare, coroners have documented deaths from cannabis toxicity and cannabis cardiotoxicity. In 2013 **Gemma Moss, 31**, a mother of three from Britain, was found dead in her bedroom after smoking marijuana. Her death was reportedly caused by cannabis toxicity and the coroner recorded the verdict of death as cannabis abuse.^{2,4,8,9} In 2014 a coroner at Bolton Coroner's Court ruled **John O'Brien, 53**, from Salford, died from cannabis cardiotoxicity, a little known condition in which smoking marijuana triggers heart problems.^{4,10}

MURDER VICTIM: In 2014 **Kristine Kirk, 44**, a wife and mother of 3 sons from Denver Colorado, called 911 and reported her husband, Richard Kirk, was acting erratically after eating marijuana candy and possibly from prescription pain pills. While on the phone with police, she was shot and killed by her husband while their three children were in the home. Mr. Kirk was charged with murder and has pled not guilty. Toxicology tests revealed the only substance found in Richard Kirk's blood was THC.^{2,3,4,11}

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT MARIJUANA?

Marijuana is an intoxicating, mind and mood altering substance that can affect people differently and be harmful to public health and public safety.¹²



Yamhill County Sheriff's Office
Sheriff Tim Svenson
www.co.yamhill.or.us/sheriff

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*Note: The selected cases of marijuana-related deaths provided in this document do not include all marijuana-related deaths that have occurred.