

ORAL FLUID TESTING FOR DRIVERS SUSPECTED OF DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

- 1. What are the advantages of using oral fluid for driving under the influence of drugs?**

Oral fluid tests are fast, simple, non-invasive, and reliable. The sample can be taken during a traffic stop and results delivered within minutes. The tests may be administered by police officers, unlike blood tests, which require trained medical personnel.
- 2. Is oral fluid testing reliable and valid?**

Yes. There are multiple published studies regarding the utility of oral fluid for drug testing at roadside as well as in drug treatment, pain management and workplace programs. The Oklahoma Board of Chemical Testing recently approved the DDS2 and Draeger devices for roadside testing and the Alabama Department of Forensic Science conducted a study that validated the DDS2 and Draeger devices. Australia, Spain, France Belgium, and the UK routinely use the DDS2 and Draeger devices for roadside testing. In addition, the Los Angeles Police Department, Sacramento Police Department, Fullerton Police Department, Bakersfield Police Department, Michigan State Police, Colorado Highway Patrol, South Dakota Highway Patrol, Vermont Highway Patrol, and Massachusetts State Police have all used oral fluid testing devices to test for drugged drivers.
- 3. Which drugs can be detected using oral fluid testing devices?**

Cannabis (specifically Delta-9-THC, the active ingredient in cannabis), cocaine, opioids, benzodiazepines, methamphetamine, and amphetamine.
- 4. How long does it take until drugs appear in oral fluid?**

The time it takes to appear is dependent on the route of administration, but drugs that are smoked, inhaled or taken orally as edibles appear within a few minutes in oral fluid. Drugs administered intravenously (e.g. cocaine) are detected in oral fluid approximately 10 min after injection.
- 5. What is the window of detection?**

Oral swab testing devices DO NOT return positive results from cannabis taken days or weeks ago. Typical detection windows for cannabis that is smoked, vaporized, or taken orally is less than 9 hours from ingestion.
- 6. Do oral tests return positive results for passive exposure to cannabis?**

Studies have shown that only extreme exposure to second-hand cannabis smoke mimics active cannabis consumption. By extreme exposure, we mean a person would need to be locked in an unventilated room with dense smoke for an hour or more. If tests are set at standard detection limits, someone otherwise exposed passively for shorter periods of time would not lead to positive oral fluid results.

References

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