

Health Promotion

Cannabidiol (CBD), urine testing and flying

Cannabis refers to the dried leaves and flowering tops of the *Cannabis sativa* or *Cannabis indica* plant. Cannabis contains active chemicals called cannabinoids that cause drug-like effects throughout the body, including the central nervous system and the immune system. It is also called marijuana. Cannabinoids, regardless of their structure or origin, bind the cannabinoid receptors of the body and the brain.

In general, there are over 80 biologically active cannabinoid chemicals in total. The main cannabinoids are CBD and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). According to the review by National Library of Medicine, THC can cause dysphoria, hallucinations, and paranoia. Other common side effects include sedation, confusion, headache, dry mouth, dysphoria, euphoria, and hypotension. Seizures and seizure-like activity can occur. For CBD, the side effects include nausea, fatigue and irritability. Any of those side effects will adversely affect pilots' flying performance.

While different countries may have different legal requirements or restrictions related to the use or consumption of CBD, in Hong Kong Special Administration Region, CBD, cannabiniol and its tetra hydro derivatives, as well as their 3-alkyl homologues, are classified as dangerous drugs under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (DDO) (Cap. 134). Possessing, manufacturing, trafficking, or consuming these substances are in contravention to such legal provisions and will be subject to a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment and a fine of \$1 million. More detailed information can be found at (www.nd.gov.hk).