



2024-03

**NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS
THE DRUG EVALUATION AND CLASSIFICATION (DEC) PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, since 1984, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) supports the Drug Evaluation and Classification (DEC) Program, which includes both the Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement education and the Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Training Program¹; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement, toxicologists, curriculum specialists, prosecutors, and training administrators have all helped to develop the DEC program's minimum standards for recognizing drug influence and impairment and their efforts culminated in the development of a multi-step protocol and DRE program that has been researched, evaluated, and found effective²; and

WHEREAS, Drug recognition experts (DREs) are law enforcement officers trained and certified through their State DRE programs and credentialed through the International Drug Evaluation and Classification (DEC) program to recognize impairment in drivers under the influence of drugs other than, or in addition to, alcohol; and

WHEREAS, most states in the U.S. have now legalized recreational and/or medical marijuana³, and in 2021, 22% of the U.S. population aged 12 years or older, or 61.2 million people, used illicit drugs in the past year⁴; and

WHEREAS, NHTSA reports about one third of all motor vehicle fatalities involve impaired drivers and 56% of all drivers involved in serious injury and fatal crashes tested positive for at least one drug⁵; and

¹ Information extracted 1/26/2024 from 2022 Annual Report, IACP DEC Program found at file:///C:/Users/chill/Downloads/2022_DECP_Annual_Report.pdf

² The International Standards of the Drug Evaluation and Classification Program, revised October 2018. <file:///C:/Users/chill/Downloads/International%20Standards%20of%20the%20DECP%20October%202018.pdf>

³ National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) reports 38 states have legalized marijuana for recreational and/or medical purposes. Information extracted 01/26/2024 from <https://www.ncsl.org/health/state-medical-cannabis-laws>

⁴ SAMHSA Announces National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) Results Detailing Mental Illness and Substance Use Levels in 2021. Information extracted 1/26/2024 from <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/01/04/samhsa-announces-national-survey-drug-use-health-results-detailing-mental-illness-substance-use-levels-2021.html>

⁵ Update to Special Reports on Traffic Safety during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency: Fourth Quarter Data [Traffic Safety Facts]. (2021-06-01). United States Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Office of Behavioral Safety Research. Report#: DOT HS 813 135. <https://doi.org/10.21949/1526015>



WHEREAS, the DRE is a well-recognized asset to improving traffic safety through their ability to detect the signs, symptoms, and effects of drug use;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the National Sheriffs' Association supports the Drug Evaluation and Classification Program and recognizes the evaluations of the Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) as a successful tool for enforcing laws against drug-impaired driving and increasing the safety of our communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the National Sheriffs' Association encourages law enforcement agencies to establish, maintain, and share their DRE resources and for the Office of Sheriff to partner with the Drug Evaluation and Classification Program to offer support through its jail intake system as adequate locations for conducting local, regional, and in-state DRE evaluations as a critical component of DRE field certification training.
