

Language Matters

- Suggested Language Regarding Marijuana Use -

When speaking about marijuana, it is important that clear, consistent language is used to counter the social acceptance and normalization that is occurring in California’s post-Proposition 64 world. Whether it’s a young person, or a reporter listening, we encourage you to pay attention to your words.

Instead of....	Use this Term	Because
Cannabis	Marijuana	Cannabis is the plant classification for marijuana. The marijuana industry prefers to use the word cannabis since it is perceived as a more socially acceptable word. Most youth know and use the words marijuana, pot and weed.
Recreational, Legalized	Federally Illegal, decriminalized	Marijuana remains a Schedule 1 drug and is illegal under federal law. In California, Proposition 64, the Adult Use of Marijuana Act (AUMA) allows adults 21 and over to possess, grow and use stipulated amounts of marijuana. AUMA does NOT allow use in public and it is unlawful to drive under the influence of marijuana.
Prescription	Recommendation	There is no such thing as a prescription for marijuana or cannabis. Doctors do not prescribe marijuana; they may only “recommend” marijuana. There are FDA-approved and scheduled medicines (ex. marinol, sativex, dronabinol) that are derived from marijuana and only these products can be lawfully prescribed.
Sickened	Overdose	An overdose happens when a substance is used to excess, requires medical attention and maybe even death. Although there have been no documented overdose deaths from marijuana, it is possible to consume too much that result in negative physical and mental effect.
Medical Marijuana	Marijuana	There is no such thing as ‘medical’ marijuana – it’s all just marijuana. The only medical marijuana the federal government recognizes is FDA Schedule 3 marijuana-derived medicines. Marijuana sold at dispensaries goes through no medical standards or protocols.
Dispensary	Pot shop or marijuana businesses and storefronts	These are businesses that sell marijuana. The marijuana industry has successfully branded these businesses as dispensaries.
Dab	Concentrates	Dabs or Dabbing is the act of using concentrated forms of marijuana in a vaporizer pen. Concentrates vary and are known as shatter, wax, oil, live resin. They all have one thing in common: they are chemical extracts from marijuana plants.