This messaging worksheet was designed to break down a critical topic, and provide key talking points and facts to assist you in your daily communications. While this messaging sheet addresses the overarching issue, it will be most effective when delivered with personalized real examples that are relevant to your agency and community.

What is the most important idea you would like your audience to know in one sentence?

The threat to public safety posed by marijuana-impaired driving on U.S. roadways is quickly becoming a major concern, partially due to the legalization of marijuana or "medical" marijuana in many states.

Describe your issue in a few sentences (or actions steps to be taken if the news is negative):

- Marijuana impairs a person's ability to operate a vehicle safely.
- As of January 1, 2016, four states and the District of Columbia have passed ballot initiatives legalizing marijuana for recreational purposes, and more states are considering legalization in the near future.
- As states consider legalizing marijuana, the threat to traffic safety must be a major consideration and cannot be overlooked.

Provide a message that no one can argue with and provide facts to back up the message:

The incidents of drugged driving are on the increase nationwide, especially with the increased use of marijuana as more states move to legalize medical marijuana and recreational marijuana sales.

> **Fact:** Latest figures show drug prevalence in weekend nighttime drivers has jumped to 20.0 percent from 16.3 percent (NHTSA In the 2013–2014 National Roadside Survey).

> **Fact:** In 2014, Colorado State Patrol troopers issued 354 citations to drivers suspected of marijuana use and endangering public safety on the roads.

> **Fact:** The frequency of drivers in fatal crashes in Washington State who tested positive for THC, alone or in combination with alcohol or other drugs, skyrocketed 111 percent from the previous four-year average (2016 Society for Study of Addiction).

What do the above facts mean to your audience or stakeholders impacted by the news?

- Marijuana has significant psychological and physiological effects that can impair driving.
- Marijuana use by drivers puts everyone at risk on our nation's roadways.
- Research shows that marijuana is a major cause of impaired driving and serious and fatal injury crashes.
- To combat marijuana-impaired driving, there needs to be an impairment standard that's the equivalent to the 0.08 blood alcohol concentration (BAC) now used to prosecute drunk drivers.

- Even though some states use 5 milligrams of THC as a measuring limit, the science on the issue is far from clear.
- States need to use care when deciding how many milligrams of THC in whole blood to use as a cut-off level.

Provide an analogy, anecdote, example(s) / reason to be trusted to further support your message:

- A recent Washington State poll shows that half of the 18–25 year old's who were self-reported marijuana users admitted driving a vehicle within three hours of using marijuana (2015 CSHRB University of Washington Young Adult Health Survey).
- One out of four drivers in Colorado and Washington State admit to driving within one hour of using marijuana (2016 AAA Foundation Report on Cannabis Use among Drivers Suspected of DUI or Involved in Collisions).
- Many marijuana users mistakenly believe that marijuana does not impair their ability to operate a vehicle (2016 AAA Foundation Report on Cannabis Use among Drivers Suspected of DUI or Involved in Collisions).

Include any additional messaging or additional information to help strengthen the points already made:

- Law enforcement is the first line of defense in identifying and reducing drugged driving.
- The adverse effects of many substances, including marijuana, can be difficult to detect at the roadside unless officers are properly trained to recognize them.
- Approximately 55,000 police officers nationwide have been trained in Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) so they can detect marijuana users behind the wheel (2015 IACP DRE Section Annual Report).
- Through the IACP Drug Evaluation and Classification (DEC) program, approximately 1,300 police officers are trained as drug recognition experts each year.
- Only a small percentage of police working patrol duties have been trained on how best to identify drivers who are impaired by marijuana; therefore, education and training on this issue is very important.
- Education and training will help law enforcement officers reduce roadway deaths and injuries involving drug-impaired drivers.