



# Idaho State Police

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**To:** Idaho Criminal Lawyers  
**From:** Matthew Gamette, ISP Forensic Services Laboratory System Director  
**Subject:** THC and THCA  
**Date:** July 22, 2019

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In February of 2017, Idaho State Police Forensic Services (ISPFS) determined that the current marijuana testing methods could not differentiate between delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinolic-acid (THCA). THCA is produced by the marijuana plant, and breaks down into THC. THC is the main psychoactive substance found in marijuana. THCA is immediately converted to THC when heated.

Since ISPFS could not determine if a substance was extracted from a marijuana plant (which would be considered marijuana), or if it was synthetically produced, we began reporting some substances as THC and/or THCA. We have requested legal and legislative interpretations to determine if THCA is covered by 37-2705(27) Idaho code that controls tetrahydrocannabinols or synthetic equivalents of the substances contained in the plant, or in the resinous extractives. To date we have not received an official opinion if THCA is considered THC in Idaho code.

We did some testing to determine if we could develop a method in the lab to differentiate between the two substances. In December 2017, the analytical method ISPFS uses for drug analysis was updated to include a method that does not convert THCA to THC during analysis.

Therefore, due to the testing limitations, any samples reported as tetrahydrocannabinol prior to December 27, 2017 could potentially be partially or completely THCA that was converted to THC in the testing process. Substances that were reported as containing "marijuana or the resins thereof" are not affected.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 208-608-2301 or [matthew.gamette@isp.idaho.gov](mailto:matthew.gamette@isp.idaho.gov) if you have any questions.

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