

State and Federal Laws and Sanctions Concerning Drugs and Alcohol

In addition to disciplinary sanctions imposed by MCLA, all students, faculty, and staff should be aware that federal, state, and some local laws treat illegal use, possession, sale, distribution, or manufacture of drugs or alcohol as serious crimes. Conviction can lead to imprisonment, fines, and assigned community service. Courts do not lift prison sentences in order to allow convicted persons to attend college or continue their jobs. Felony and certain other convictions can prevent you from entering many fields of employment or professions and may have to be listed on applications for employment or admission to graduate or professional schools.

Many cities and towns in Massachusetts, including North Adams, have local ordinances and regulations which prohibit public consumption of alcoholic beverages or consumption of alcoholic beverages on private property without the owner's consent. The Department of Conservation and Recreation also prohibits public consumption of alcohol in its parks. Similar laws and regulations apply in most other states and in many localities.

Massachusetts laws punish sale or delivery of alcoholic beverages to persons under 21 with a fine of up to \$2,000 and six months imprisonment, or both. Misrepresenting one's age or falsifying an identification to obtain alcoholic beverages is punishable by a fine of \$300. First conviction of driving under the influence of alcohol has a penalty of a \$500–\$5,000 fine, one-year revocation of driver's license, up to two-and-a-half years in prison, and mandatory alcohol rehabilitation.

Massachusetts has criminal penalties for use of controlled substances, or drugs, with penalties varying with the type of drug. In general, use of narcotic and addictive drugs, and drugs with high potential for abuse, have heavier penalties.

Possession of drugs is illegal without valid authorization. While penalties for possession are generally not as great as for manufacture and distribution of drugs, possession of a relatively large quantity may be considered distribution. Under both state and federal laws, penalties for possession, manufacture, and distribution are much greater for second and subsequent convictions. Many laws dictate mandatory prison terms and the full minimum term must be served.

Massachusetts makes it illegal to be in a place where heroin is kept and to be "in the company" of a person known to possess heroin. Anyone in the presence of heroin at a private party or in a dormitory suite risks a serious drug conviction. Sale and possession of "drug paraphernalia" is illegal in Massachusetts. Under federal laws and some state laws, participation in drug-related criminal activity can result in seizure or forfeiture of personal property and other assets utilized in conjunction with or stemming from the proceeds of the illegal activity. In addition, conviction of a drug-related offense may entail civil fines and denial or revocation of certain licenses and benefits.

Persons convicted of drug possession under state or federal law are ineligible for federal student grants and loans or for participation in federally sponsored research grants or contracts for up to one year after the first conviction, and up to five years after the second; the penalty for distributing drugs is loss of benefits for five years after the first conviction, 10 years after the second, and permanently after the third. *

Under federal law, distribution of drugs to a person under age 21 is punishable by twice the normal penalty, i.e., a mandatory one-year prison term; a third conviction is punishable by mandatory life imprisonment. These penalties apply to distribution of drugs in or within 1,000 feet of a college or school. Federal law sets greatly heightened prison sentences for manufacture and distribution of drugs if death or serious injury results from use of the substance.

**In accordance with the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, as a condition of employment, any employee who is engaged in the performance of work under a federal grant or contract must notify the University if he or she is convicted of violating any criminal drug statute for activities done in the workplace not later than 10 days after conviction; students who receive Pell and certain other federal grants are subject to similar conditions and must report any conviction of a drug-related offense to the US Department of Education within 10 days of the conviction if the offense occurred during the period covered by the grant.*

Federal Drug Laws

The possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs is prohibited by federal law. There are strict penalties for drug convictions, including mandatory prison terms for many offenses. The following information, although not complete, is an overview of federal penalties for first convictions. All penalties are doubled for any subsequent drug conviction.

A. Denial of Federal Benefits 21 U.S.C. 862

A federal drug conviction may result in the loss of federal benefits, including school loans, grants, scholarships, contracts, and licenses. Federal drug trafficking convictions may result in denial of federal benefits for up to five years for a first conviction. Federal drug convictions for possession may result in denial of federal benefits for up to one year for a first conviction and up to five years for subsequent convictions.

B. Forfeiture of Personal Property and Real Estate 21 U.S.C. 853

Any person convicted of a federal drug offense punishable by more than one year in prison shall forfeit to the United States any personal or real property related to the violation, including houses, cars, and other personal belongings. A warrant of seizure is issued and property is seized at the time an individual is arrested on charges that may result in forfeiture.

C. Federal Drug Trafficking Penalties 21 U.S.C. 841

Penalties for federal drug trafficking convictions vary according to the quantity of the controlled substance involved in the transaction. The list below is a sample of the range and severity of federal penalties imposed for first convictions. Penalties for subsequent convictions are twice as severe. If death or serious bodily injury results from the use of a controlled substance which has been illegally distributed, the person convicted on federal charges of distributing the substance faces a mandatory life sentence and fines ranging up to \$8 million. Persons convicted on federal charges of drug trafficking within 1,000 feet of a university (21 U.S.C. 845a) face penalties of prison terms and fines which are twice as high as the regular penalties for the offense, with a mandatory prison sentence of at least one year.

D. Federal Drug Possession Penalties Persons convicted on federal charges of possessing any controlled substance face penalties of up to one year in prison and a mandatory fine of no less than \$1,000 up to a maximum of \$100,000. Second convictions are punishable by not less than 15 days but not more than two years in prison and a minimum fine of \$2,500. Subsequent convictions are punishable by not less than 90 days but not more than three years in prison and a minimum fine of \$5,000.

| Substance | Amount | Penalty—First Conviction |
|---|------------------------|---|
| Heroin | 1 kg. or more | Prison: not less than 10 years, not more than life. Fine: up to \$4 million. |
| Cocaine | 5 kg. or more | |
| Crack Cocaine | 50 gm. or more | |
| Methamphetamine | 100 gm. or more | |
| PCP | 100 gm. or more | |
| LSD | 10 gm. or more | |
| Marijuana | 1,000 kg. or more | |
| N-Phenyl-N-propenamide | 400 gm. or more | |
| Heroin | 100–999 gm | Prison: not less than 5 years, not more than 40 years. Fine: up to \$2 million |
| Cocaine | 500–4,999 gm | |
| Crack Cocaine | 5–49 gm | |
| Methamphetamine | 10–99 gm | |
| PCP | 10–99 gm. | |
| LSD | 1–10 gm. | |
| Marijuana | 100–1,000 kg | |
| N-Phenyl-N-propenamide | 40–399 gm | |
| Amphetamines | Any Amount | Prison: up to 3 years |
| Barbiturates | Any Amount | Fine: up to \$250,000. |
| Marijuana | 50–100 kg. | Prison: up to 20 years. Fine: up to \$1 million. |
| Hashish | 10–100 kg | |
| Hash Oil | 1–100 kg | |
| Flunitrazepam (Rohypnol, “roofies,” “roaches”) | 1 gm. or | |
| Marijuana | less than 50 kg | Prison: up to 5 years. Fine: up to \$250,000. |
| Hashish | less than 10 kg. | |
| Hash Oil | less than 1 kg. | |
| Flunitrazepam (Rohypnol, “roofies,” “roaches”) | less than 30 mg. or | |