



Rhode Island Public Defender

Tel: (401) 222-3492 | Fax: (401) 222-5225 | Web: www.ripd.org | Email: Info@ripd.org

HEARD A LOT OF TALK ABOUT MARIJUANA RECENTLY?

KNOW THE FACTS

On June 13, 2012, Governor Chafee signed into law legislation (S 2253/H 7092) that decriminalizes possession of less than 1 oz of marijuana.

This decriminalization will *not be in effect until April 1, 2013.*

Once it is in effect:

- Possession of less than 1 oz of marijuana will be a civil offense, not a criminal offense. These cases will be heard in the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal, located at 670 New London Ave., in Cranston.
- If you are over 18, and are charged with possession of less than 1 oz of marijuana, you can be fined up to \$150 and will forfeit the marijuana. If you are under 18, you can be fined the same amount but will also have to complete a drug awareness program and engage in community service.
- The civil fine will double to \$300 if not paid within 30 days and then will double again to \$600 if not paid within 90 days.
- Police can still stop you if they have reasonable suspicion and/or probable cause that you possess marijuana, but they cannot arrest you because of this charge unless you fail to identify yourself.
- If you are on probation or parole, you cannot be violated because of the offense of possession of less than 1 oz of marijuana.
- If you are found in possession of less than 1 oz of marijuana for the third time in an 18-month period, the case will be charged as a criminal offense.