◼ CANNABIS AND YOU

HALTON POLICE TO SHIFT FOCUS ON MARIJUANA

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Mike Barrett/Metroland
The Halton Regional Police Service is advising residents of how they will be policing marijuana now that the substance has been legalized.

Don't call the police if someone is smoking pot in their backyard - that's not their job anymore.

The Halton Regional Police Service is notifying residents of how their jobs have changed with the legalization of cannabis and how they will be policing the substance.

The service will be responding to calls about black market sales of marijuana, as well as complaints about those under the age of 19 consuming the drug.

"It's a mindset; it's a change," said Insp. Kevin Maher. "We have to look at cannabis as a legal substance."

Police will also be vigilant in watching for impaired driving involving marijuana, as well as the operation of other vehicles such as boats and equipment.

The Halton Region health department is responsible for enforcing regulations on smoking cannabis in public. Smoking marijuana is prohibited in the same places tobacco smoking is not allowed, such as enclosed workplaces, playgrounds, recreation centres, hospitals and restaurant patios.

Maher calls the time frame following legalization the "social adjustment period," and asks neighbours to start thinking about what's legal and what isn't.

"We're ready; we're going to be patient," said Maher, explaining that the department's call-takers are trained to recognize if a marijuana-related complaint warrants police attention.

If residents are concerned about nuisance cannabis smoke from neighbours, police advise them to have a constructive conversa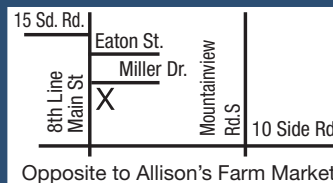tion with the neighbour about the issue.