

Medical pot puts employers in bind

by UPI

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. - As more states adopt medical marijuana laws, U.S. employers are having to decide whether to allow workers to smoke pot on the job.

Some are sympathetic. Irvin Rosenfeld, a stockbroker from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is one of five remaining participants in a federal pilot program. Newbridge Securities, the Florida firm where he works, has no problem with the six joints he smokes every day at work.

"All my clients know I use it," Rosenfeld told USA Today. "Without it, I wouldn't be able to work."

Like many people who use marijuana for pain relief, Rosenfeld says he does not get high from smoking it.

But none of the 12 states who have legalized marijuana for medical uses since California took the first step in 1996 have passed laws protecting users from getting fired. Many companies say marijuana use is a safety hazard, even when all smoking takes place outside business hours.

Employers worry, however, about being sued for discrimination against the disabled.

"The rights of an employer to ensure productivity and safety around machinery and on the job has to take precedence," said Mark Levitt, a labor and employment lawyer in Tampa.

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