

Maine's drug laws are overly harsh and out of step with other states.

200 mg: Maine's threshold for felony possession charges for heroin¹

2 g: Maine's threshold for automatic trafficking charges for heroin²

States with higher felony possession thresholds:

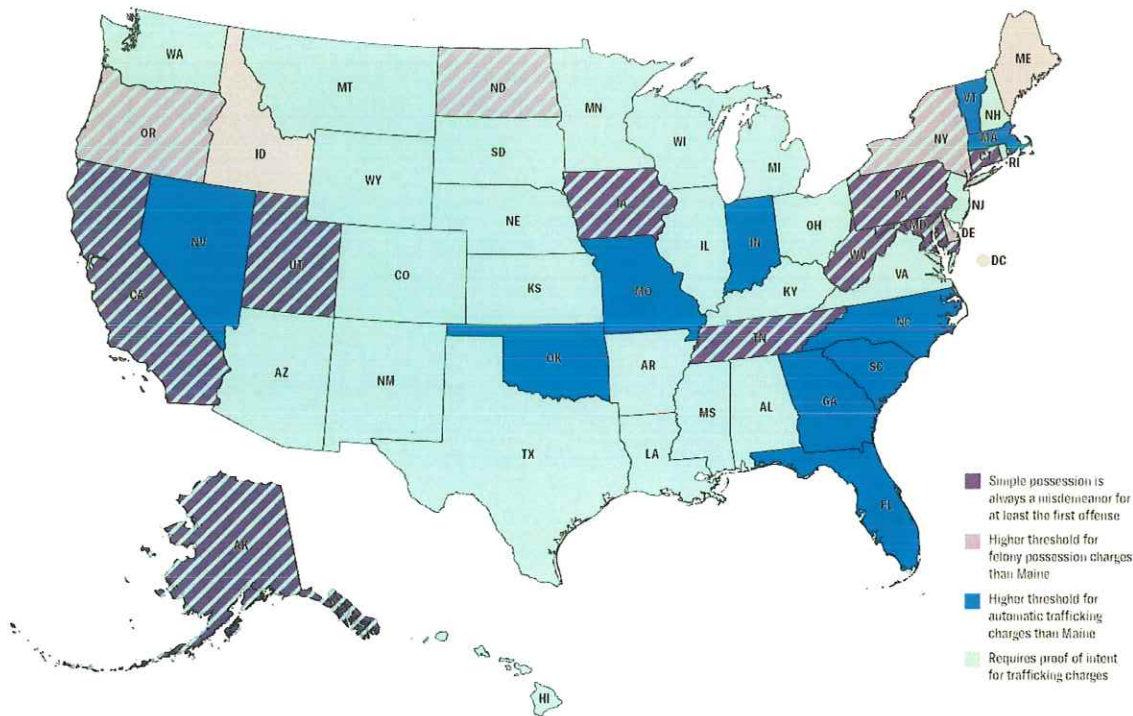
Delaware and Oregon (1 g); Wyoming (3 g powder/300 mg liquid); New York (3.54 g); and North Dakota (50 g). In Alaska, California, Connecticut, Iowa, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah and West Virginia, simple possession is always a misdemeanor for at least the first offense. In Oklahoma, possession of less than 10 g is a misdemeanor.

States with higher trafficking thresholds:

Vermont (3.5 g); Florida, Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina and South Carolina (4 g); Oklahoma (10 g); Massachusetts (18 g); Indiana (28 g); and Missouri (30 g).

*39 states require proof of intent rather than relying on weight threshold.

States with better drug laws than Maine:



¹ Class C felony punishable by up to 5 years in prison

² Class B felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison

Consequences of drug convictions for people in Maine

Housing:

- Most landlords conduct criminal background checks and can deny housing based on any criminal conviction.
- Public Housing Authorities can evict an entire household for the drug-related criminal activity by one of the household's members or a guest of the household, *even if the others in the household didn't know the criminal activity was occurring*
- Federal housing assistance programs are required to deny applicants who have been evicted from public housing within the past 3 years for drug-related reasons

Employment:

- cannot serve in the military with a felony drug conviction
- many federal occupational licenses, federal contracts unavailable to those with a drug conviction
- For state occupational licenses, there is a 3 to 10 year waiting period, depending on the license, during which time a person with a record is ineligible to apply or may lose their license if they already have one
- People must "check the box" if they have ever been convicted of a crime on many job applications (job applicants with a criminal record are 50 percent less likely to receive a call-back from submitting a job application)

Loans:

- A drug conviction can make a person ineligible for federal loans
- If a person is convicted for possession or sale of drugs for conduct that occurred while the person was enrolled in school, the person becomes ineligible for future federal student loans.

Other:

- It is unlawful under federal law for someone with a felony conviction to possess a firearm
- Two thirds of colleges (public and private) collect information on an applicant's criminal record and may make admissions decisions based on those records
- People incarcerated for more than one year lose their SSI/SSDI and must reapply in a cumbersome process with much paperwork needed
- Federal law bans people with felony drug convictions from receiving TANF/SNAP/etc. *unless* a state specifically opts out. While Maine has opted out of this ban, it spent 8 years arguing over it, and could reverse course under a future administration.

Syringe/Hypodermic Needles Information

10 states do not criminalize needle possession, including many in New England.

States that do not criminalize drug paraphernalia at all (including but not limited to needles/syringes)

Alaska

Oregon

Wyoming

Michigan

West Virginia

Rhode Island

States that have removed needles/syringe from their statute's definition of drug paraphernalia, and don't criminalize them separately either

Connecticut

Massachusetts

Nevada

New Hampshire