

# CHAPTER 50

# Licensing of Cannabis Operations Ordinance Amendments

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Board of Supervisors  
June 9, 2026



County Executive Office

# Overview

- Chapter 50 Ordinance Amendments
  - Replacement of Sheriff role in licensing activities with staff from the cannabis licensing division
- Seek any other board direction regarding the County's cannabis program

# Background

- Board adopted Chapter 50, Licensing of Cannabis Operations, in May 2018
- Chapter 50 has been amended several times to address unanticipated issues identified over time
- At the June 2025 budget hearings staff received Board direction to identify program efficiencies and cost saving measures
- The CEO's office in coordination with the Sheriff office worked to address Board concerns and reached consensus on the proposed amendments
- Staff proposes replacement of the Sheriff role in licensing activities with staff from the cannabis licensing division

# Introduction

- Currently, Chapter 50, §50-11 requires Sheriff review and approval of live scans and site security plans
  - §50-11(b) Criminal history checks; requires live scans for all applicants, owners, persons with at least twenty percent financial interest
  - §50-11(c) Site security plan; requires Sheriff review and approval of site security plans

## Discussion

- Existing requirement for Sheriff review and approval of owner live scans has declined proportionally with the decline in new cannabis business license applications
  - Criminal background checks are no longer required for all permanent employees and third-party labor
  - Dedicated staff are no longer required for this activity
- Existing requirement for Sheriff review of site security plans is duplicative
  - All site security plans are reviewed and approved by Planning & Development during the land use entitlement process and prior to business license issuance; ongoing compliance is primarily monitored via Chapter 35

## Discussion

- Staff proposes the following:
  1. Cannabis Licensing Division staff to assume site security plan and live scan licensing coordination activities
  2. Sheriff to continue their compliance activities via their Proposition 64 funded grant; compliance site visits and desk audits provides an extra layer of oversight to reaffirm security systems are working as designed and approved

# Proposed Amendments

Issue Area	Proposed Amendment	County Code
Review of process of application for cannabis business license	Removes Sheriff from licensing application review process.	§ 50-9
Application review by the sheriff's department	Replaces Sheriff from live scan check responsibilities and site security plan review with cannabis licensing division staff from the County Executive Office. Adds a new requirement for Sheriff to conduct compliance activities verifying in-field site security practices align with site security plans.	§ 50-11

# Proposed Amendments

Issue Area	Proposed Amendment	County Code
Change in Ownership	Replaces Sheriff's live scan check responsibilities with cannabis licensing division staff from the County Executive Office.	§ 50-23

# Summary

- Currently, Chapter 50 requires Sheriff to review and approve site security plans and live scans for all applicants, owners, and persons having at least a twenty percent financial interest
- This amendment proposes replacement of the Sheriff role in Chapter 50 with staff from the Cannabis Licensing Division pertaining to the review and coordination of:
  1. Live scans
  2. Site security plans

# Summary

- Sheriff will continue to cultivate a culture of compliance via Proposition 64 grant monies
- Proposed language is meant to reduce duplicative reviews, right-size departmental responsibilities, and simplify the business license process
- If approved, new ordinance language is effective 30 days from the June 23, 2026, second reading (approval)

# Recommended **Actions**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Consider the introduction (First Reading) of an Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara amending Chapter 50 of the Santa Barbara County Code, Licensing of Cannabis Operations pertaining to replacement of the County of Santa Barbara Sheriff Office role in cannabis business licensing activities specific to site security plan review and live scan check responsibilities as required in 50-11 with staff from the Cannabis Licensing Division;
- b) Read the title and waive further reading of the ordinance in full; and,
- c) Set a hearing on the Administrative Agenda for June 23, 2026 to consider the Second Reading and CEQA determination for amendments to Chapter 50.