

Attachment C

Ordinance Amending Chapter 50 – Licensing of Commercial Cannabis Operations

Adopted: May 1, 2018

Amended: April 9, 2019, August 27, 2019, December 17, 2019, February 2, 2021, November 2, 2021, March 1, 2022, November 29, 2022, July 18, 2023, and April 1, 2025

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ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 50, LICENSING OF CANNABIS OPERATIONS, OF THE
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY CODE

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 50 of the Santa Barbara County Code, titled “Licensing of Cannabis Operations,” Section 50-2, Definitions, is hereby amended to add subsection (ii) and shall read as follows:

...

(ii) “Sensitive area” includes:

- (1) Locations where cannabis or cannabis products are stored, prepared for sale, or displayed for purchase;
- (2) Designated locations where cash is kept including but not limited locations where money is counted, processed, or stored; locations containing cash vaults and registers; locations containing safe deposit boxes;
- (3) Locations where the surveillance recording and data storage systems are housed; or
- (4) Other designated areas identified as a sensitive area during the application review process.

SECTION 2. Chapter 50 of the Santa Barbara County Code, titled “Licensing of Cannabis Operations,” Section 50-8, Application content for an annual cannabis business license, subsection (b)(6)(ii), is hereby amended and shall read as follows:

...

(b) The application shall contain, without limitation, the following documentation:

...

- (6) Site Security Plan and Criminal Background Check.

...

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ii. Criminal background checks in compliance with section 50-11 below.

...

SECTION 3. Chapter 50 of the Santa Barbara County Code, titled “Licensing of Cannabis Operations,” Section 50-11, Application review by the sheriff’s department and ongoing requirements – Criminal history check and security plan, subsection (b), is hereby amended and shall read as follows:

...

(b) Criminal history checks.

- (1) All applicants, owners, persons having at least a twenty percent financial interest, managers, supervisors of a cannabis operation, and any person who has access to any program used to record the inventory and movement of cannabis and cannabis products through the commercial cannabis supply chain from seed to sale, must submit to a live scan check. The live scan shall be performed by the sheriff’s cannabis team or a Department of Justice approved third-party live scan vendor. If using a third-party live scan vendor, the forms must be obtained from the sheriff’s department and the live scan returns must be sent directly from the Department of Justice to the sheriff’s department for retention and review. This live scan check consists of a criminal history search for disqualifying convictions identified in subsection (7) below. These checks must be completed on applicants, owners, and persons having at least twenty percent financial interest prior to the issuance of a business license or prior to any subsequent renewal. All persons listed in this subsection (1) must have their live scan completed and approved by the sheriff’s department before the person is allowed to work on the premises.
- (2) All applicants are required to establish criminal history check procedures for any persons not listed in subsection (1) above who work within or has access to sensitive areas on the premises. Criminal history checks will be the equivalent to, and may include the use of, live scan. If using live scan, forms must be obtained from the sheriff’s cannabis team. These live scan returns must be sent directly from the Department of Justice to the sheriff’s department, for retention and review. Completed non-live scan employee criminal history checks must be retained by the applicant and must be sent to the sheriff’s department for review. Upon review, the sheriff’s department may conduct further investigation, as outlined in subsection (5) below. Upon

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satisfactory review of the criminal history check, the sheriff's cannabis team will obtain a photograph and issue an identification (ID) card to each qualifying person subject to this subsection (2). All persons subject to this subsection (2) are required to undergo a criminal history check that must be approved by the sheriff's department before the person is permitted to work on the premises. If the criminal history check is conducted through a method other than by live scan, the applicant must conduct a criminal history check every 12 months.

- (3) Persons hired for the sole purpose of manual labor on the cannabis premises are not subject to the background requirements listed above. These persons shall be issued a temporary ID card by a manager, supervisor or security equivalent. Temporary ID cards will be valid at any licensed commercial cannabis operation in the county. Persons in this category shall not have supervisory or managerial responsibilities and shall neither work in any sensitive areas, handle money or funds concerning cannabis operations, nor remain on the premises unsupervised.
- (4) Licensees are required to promptly notify the sheriff department of any changes to persons listed in subsections (1) – (2) above and timely perform any criminal history checks of new persons prior to start of employment or involvement in the cannabis operation.
- (5) The sheriff's department may conduct further investigation of persons listed in subsections (1) and (2) above as deemed appropriate and shall consider compliance with Business and Professions Code Section 26057, as may be amended. During the criminal history check process, the sheriff's department may also obtain a copy of criminal records in the United States, if any, and may obtain a copy of criminal records in any other country, if obtaining such foreign criminal records is feasible. Upon the satisfactory review of the criminal history of persons listed in subsections (1) and (2) above, the sheriff's department will issue each qualified person an identification (ID) card. This identification shall be worn when on the licensed premise and used to visually verify authorization of employment at that site.
- (6) If the sheriff disapproves the application, the sheriff shall notify the county executive office in writing giving the reason(s) for the disapproval.
- (7) Persons listed in subsections (1) and (2) above and who have been convicted of a felony or other crime as set forth in Business and Professions Code

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Section 26057, as may be amended, shall not work on the premises or be involved in any capacity with the cannabis operation.

- (8) Persons listed in subsections (1) and (2) above shall provide a copy of the primary identification documents required by the State of California Employment Development Department before commencing work at the cannabis operation or premises. Licensee shall, upon the request of the sheriff's department, provide a copy of the primary identification documents for the purposes of verifying identity and conducting criminal history checks pursuant to subsection (5) above.

...

SECTION 4. Chapter 50 of the Santa Barbara County Code, titled "Licensing of Cannabis Operations," Section 50-23, Change in Ownership, subsection (a), is hereby amended and shall read as follows:

- (a) Criminal background checks required pursuant to section 50-11, shall be provided to the sheriff prior to the proposed change. Once the sheriff has approved the new person's criminal history and before the new person engages in any activity related to the cannabis business license, the licensee shall submit this approval along with the new person's contact information to the county executive office.

...

SECTION 5. Chapter 50 of the Santa Barbara County Code, titled "Licensing of Cannabis Operations," Section 50-25, Cannabis business license operating requirements, subsection (a)(2)(iii), is hereby amended and shall read as follows:

- (a) Throughout the term of the cannabis business license, each and every licensee shall comply with this chapter, the County Code, and state law, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

...

- (2) Display License and ID Cards.

...

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iii. The sheriff's department shall be notified of any changes to staffing at the premises and/or cannabis operation and any new persons working at the premises and/or cannabis operations shall be subject to criminal history checks to the extent required under section 50-11(b)(1) and (b)(2).

...

SECTION 6. Except as amended by this Ordinance the Santa Barbara County Code shall remain unchanged and shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance. The Board of Supervisors hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause and phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, or phrases be declared invalid.

SECTION 8. This Ordinance shall take effect and become operative 30 days from the date of its adoption by the Board of Supervisors. Before the expiration of 15 days after its passage a summary of it shall be published once together with the names of the members of the Board of Supervisors voting for and against the same in the Santa Barbara Independent and in the Santa Maria Times, newspapers of general circulation published in the County of Santa Barbara.

SECTION 9. Cannabis activities already are highly regulated by both the state and federal governments, and their regulation of cannabis activities is subject to rapid changes. Even if the Board of Supervisors adopts this Ordinance, the Board of Supervisors retains all of its statutory authority concerning cannabis activities. For example, even if the Ordinance becomes

operative, the Board of Supervisors still may take action(s) later to change the zoning and/or licensing of cannabis activities to being prohibited. Changing the zoning and/or licensing of cannabis activities to being prohibited, could occur -- for example, but is not limited to -- if: 1) the County Treasurer is not able to deposit cannabis-related funds in a suitable financial institution; and/or 2) the Board of Supervisors submits a proposed County tax on commercial cannabis activity to the voters and the voters do not approve the tax. In part because cannabis

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activities are highly regulated by both the state and federal governments and their regulation of cannabis activities is subject to rapid changes, the Board of Supervisors later may need to change the zoning and/or licensing of cannabis activities to being prohibited and may need to do so without cannabis activities receiving: 1) an amortization period; and/or 2) legal nonconforming use status.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California, this 10th day of June, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

LAURA CAPPS, CHAIR
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

ATTEST:
MONA MIYASATO, COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CLERK OF THE BOARD

By _____
Deputy Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
RACHEL VAN MULLEM
COUNTY COUNSEL

Signed by:
By  _____
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Deputy County Counsel