



# COVID-19 & Cannabis Companies

## What Employers Need to Do to Protect Employees and Customers

Essential businesses, such as retail stores supplying medical cannabis and pharmacies, are required to stay open. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape on how to operate. Below are some best practice guidelines specific to cannabis retail stores and production/grow facilities. If federal, state/provincial, and local recommendations are more stringent, follow those guidelines.

### Retail Establishments

Medical cannabis users may have compromised immune systems and extra precautions are recommended. In addition to the guidance provided below, retailers should consider the following:

Consider, evaluate, and appropriately publicize protocols relative to employee interactions with customers.

#### Ordering:

- Encourage mobile or order-ahead features to speed process and reduce exposure.
- Reduce the number store visits by recommending patients order the prescription maximum allowable number of days (i.e. 60 days)
- Consider curbside pickup and contact-less delivery, with strict guidelines and limitations, if your jurisdiction allows it.
- Consider appointment-only operations.

#### Entry:

Designate an employee or officer who must implement social distancing and personal sanitation:

- Limit the number of customers in the store
- In the queue, maintain social distance of 6 feet minimum and place markings as appropriate
- Provide entry sanitation stations and verify that all clients use prior to entry

### **In-store/exit:**

- Limit sales only to sealed products.
- Maintain social distance of 6 feet minimum and place markings as appropriate. Similarly manage queue for cashier.
- Sanitize high touch points frequently (every 30 minutes or less), such as ID check, booths, display cases, etc.
- Keep in-store order forms in plastic coverings and sanitize after each customer use.
- Shut down on premise tasting rooms where vendors promote certain edibles (without infused cannabis).
- Have cashiers wear gloves. Avoid/limit acceptance of cash, touching ID for verification. Use touchless payments systems or sanitize keypads after each use.
- Install separation barriers at cashiers.
- Have sanitation stations at all exits.

## **Production**

Provide refresher training for employees on personal hygiene requirements focusing on the following:

- Review current production sanitation procedures and adjust accordingly focusing on high touch points or any potentially contaminated surfaces not currently addressed.
- Review sick call policy and make sure employees know they can't work sick.
- Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds using the proper method, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, going to the bathroom, before eating, and when you touch any communal surface (i.e. door handles, phones, non-sanitized, surface).
- If you use gloves, use proper donning techniques
- Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze; throw in trash and wash hands.
- If you cough or sneeze in a production area, do so in the elbow of your outer garment, and immediately change following proper donning techniques and hand washing
- Avoid touching your face. If you do, rewash your hands prior to returning to production area

Other Considerations:

- Allow only essential visitors (i.e. deliveries or servicing companies).
- Implement your bio-hazard plan.
- Sanitize non-production equipment often, such as phones, keyboards, etc.

- Limit large gatherings of people and maintain social distancing in cafeteria and production areas.
- Have office staff work from home or teleconnect.
- Consider a split shift for the management team, or have a back up team offsite to step in for anyone who becomes ill.
- Consider designating someone to verify proper personal hygiene before going on the production floor.
- Limit non-essential travel.
- Ensure that there are adequate gloves, masks, etc. for all employees.

The requirements to keeping open “essential” businesses vary by location. Please check for any changes with your local jurisdiction.

Contact your HUB Risk Services specialist to learn how to help protect your business and employees from issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information, visit the [HUB Coronavirus Resource Center](#).

**References:**

*Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission, updates on COVID-19*

*Canadian Food Inspection Agency - (CFIA) COVID-19 Info for industry*

*Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB) update on COVID-19*

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