

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT CANNABIS RETAILERS

When properly regulated and operated, cannabis retailers are a positive part of a community. They generate dozens of new jobs for local residents and create business opportunities for nearby shops and neighborhood cafes. If you have concerns about a cannabis retailer, please contact the operators. They will work with you to address your concerns. Here is more information to consider:

WHAT IS CANNABIS (marijuana)?

Cannabis is a medicinal herb recommended by physicians. The cannabis plant has a long history of use and it is one of the 50 fundamental herbs of traditional Chinese medicine.¹ Today, it is recommended for a broad range of indications.

WHAT IS A CANNABIS RETAILER?

Cannabis retailers (not "pot clubs") are stores licensed by the state and local government where patients and other customers can safely access cannabis, including for medical purposes. By law, you must show a valid ID and be at least 21 years old to enter a cannabis retailer, except that medical patients with a doctor's recommendation must be at least 18 years old.

ARE CANNABIS RETAILERS LEGAL UNDER STATE LAW?

Yes. In 1996, California voters enacted Proposition 215, allowing medical cannabis collectives; in 2016, voters passed Proposition 64, allowing adult-use cannabis retail. The Medicinal and Adult-Use Cannabis Regulation Act requires the state to license and regulate cannabis retailers.² Per this law's regulatory requirements, cannabis retailers must maintain local government licensure.

HOW ARE CANNABIS RETAILERS REGULATED UNDER SAN FRANCISCO LAW?

The SF Board of Supervisors adopted the Medical Cannabis Act in 2005, and the Regulation of Cannabis Businesses Ordinance in 2017. The [SF Office of Cannabis](#) regulates cannabis retailers with help from Departments of Public Health, Planning, Fire, Building, and the Mayor's Office on Disability. To complain about illegal cannabis activity, call 311, email officeofcannabis@sfgov.org, or contact the Office of Cannabis at <https://sf.gov/report-illegal-cannabis-activity>. To be permitted, new cannabis retailers must:

- Be Located 600ft+ from schools and other cannabis retailers
- Provide criminal background checks for operators/managers
- Pass city and state inspections
- Submit a security plan to the city and the state
- Produce an odor mitigation plan (e.g., ventilation systems)
- Give neighbors contact information for an on-site community liaison to address neighborhood concerns
- Maintain litter removal services for the sidewalks and alleys adjacent to the premises.

WHAT ABOUT CANNABIS LAWS AND CHILDREN?

There is no evidence suggesting cannabis retailers put children at risk. In reviewing whether reforming cannabis laws had any impact on use of cannabis by youth, a major 2019 study found that adult-use cannabis laws were associated with a statistically significant decrease in teen cannabis use.³

DO CANNABIS RETAILERS CREATE CRIME?

There is no evidence that well-run cannabis retailers cause crime, and it is unfair to stigmatize cannabis users by treating their retailers like a criminal or nuisance activity. Security cameras are required inside and outside the premises, and security guards are employed to ensure safety and deter criminal activity near the facility. A 2019 literature review of 42 previously published studies found no increase in crime related to nearby cannabis retailers, nor decrease in property values.⁴ A RAND study showed that crime rates near cannabis retailers are lower than those near closed cannabis retailers.⁵

DO CANNABIS CONSUMERS RE-SELL THEIR CANNABIS?

No. Law enforcement monitors storefront facilities, who can lose their permit if customers are reselling cannabis. Many cannabis retailers have "good neighbor" rules for customers that emphasize sensitivity to neighbors' concerns and absolutely prohibit the resale of cannabis. Anyone violating that prohibition is typically banned from any further contact with the cannabis retailer.

WHY STOREFRONTS AND NOT DELIVERY SERVICES?

Both are necessary to provide adequate safety and access. Delivery services provide a convenient way for homebound patients to access cannabis. However, storefronts provide opportunity to view, smell, and compare products before purchasing. Face-to-face interaction also benefits new or naive customers with questions about cannabis, proper use, or the variety of products available.

¹ Wong, Ming. *La Médecine chinoise par les plantes*. Paris: Tchou. 1976.

² [Cal. Business & Professions Code Division 10](#).

³ Anderson DM, Hansen B, Rees DI, Sabia JJ. Association of Marijuana Laws With Teen Marijuana Use: New Estimates From the Youth Risk Behavior Surveys. *JAMA Pediatr*. 2019;173(9):879–881. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.1720.

⁴ Downs D, Barcott B, Corva D. Special Report: Debunking Dispensary Myths. *Leafly* (May 2019). See drive.google.com/file/d/1osj59y1stEz_vwsxV_O8_3s6rRC9wMLS

⁵ RAND. *Regulating Medical Marijuana Dispensaries: An Overview with Preliminary Evidence of Their Impact on Crime*. 2011. See http://american-safe-access.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/RAND_Study.pdf.