



New Medical Cannabis Business Regulations in Effect

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – Last night, City Council approved the *Cannabis-Related Business Regulation Bylaw* which includes rezoning and business licence requirements for medical cannabis businesses in Victoria. The new regulations are designed to reduce impacts on the community while maintaining access to medical cannabis.

Under the new bylaw, all retail businesses where medical cannabis is sold or provided to a person who visits the premises is considered a “storefront cannabis retailer.” All storefront cannabis retailers are now required to be rezoned for this use and to obtain a business licence.

Some of the rezoning requirements include a 200-metre distance between retailers, as well as between retailers and a school. Applications will be accepted starting today, however a business licence will not be issued until the rezoning is approved. The fees for a rezoning application and business licence are \$7,500 and \$5,000 respectively.

Storefront cannabis retailers that began operation after July 28, 2016 must comply with the new regulations immediately, meaning these businesses cannot operate until their rezoning application has been approved by City Council. Storefront cannabis retailers that were in operation prior to July 28, 2016 may continue to operate while making progress towards a rezoning, however they must comply with operational requirements immediately. These include no cannabis consumption on premises, operating hours restricted to 7 a.m. - 8 p.m., and a maximum of two display signs without any images.

Cannabis-related businesses are those where cannabis is promoted, advocated, paraphernalia used in the consumption of cannabis is sold or provided, and where cannabis may or may not be stored on site. Cannabis-related businesses in Victoria are only required to apply for a business licence. A rezoning is not required. The business licence fee is \$5,000 where cannabis is stored onsite, and \$500 where it is not.

Information about the new regulations and requirements is available on the City’s website and businesses are encouraged to meet with City staff in advance of submitting a rezoning application. The rezoning process takes approximately six to eight months to complete. The City will begin processing rezoning applications in December once additional staffing is in place.

The City of Victoria has been exploring regulations for the operation of medical cannabis businesses over the past year. The new bylaw is informed by public input collected through two online surveys, a town hall meeting and correspondence. There are currently 38 medical cannabis-related businesses in Victoria, with approximately 35 of these operating as storefront medical cannabis retailers.

City Council has established *the Cannabis-Related Business Regulation Bylaw* to regulate businesses selling cannabis for medical purposes. The new regulations do not legalize or permit the sale of cannabis as this is the jurisdiction of the Federal government. For more information, visit: www.victoria.ca/medicalcannabis

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