

Medical Cannabis Dispensary Use Permit Requirements

PJR-057

❖ **Purpose:** The purpose of this handout is to provide the use permit requirements for medical cannabis dispensaries. ❖

The Medical Cannabis Dispensary Ordinance, effective April 20, 2007, implements Proposition 215 and SB 420 which (1) enables people to obtain cannabis for medical purposes in a safe manner, and (2) protects public health, safety and welfare.

There are two Levels of Medical Cannabis Dispensaries. Level 1 Dispensaries serve 20 or fewer patients per day, and have fewer than 300 patients total. Level 2 Dispensaries serve more than 20 patients per day, and/or have more than 300 patients total. Level 1 Dispensaries are allowed in the Neighborhood Commercial (C1), Retail Business and Service (C2), and Limited Commercial (LC) zones. Level 2 Dispensaries are allowed within Retail Business and Service (C2), and Limited Commercial (LC) zones, but only within designated Urban Service Areas where public sewer and water are available.

Permit Requirements: A Use Permit is required for all medical cannabis dispensaries. Notification to property owners within 300-feet and a public hearing before the Planning Commission (PC) are required to establish the Use Permit. The Use Permit, if approved, is valid for a period of 1 year. The Use Permit may be extended administratively by the Planning Director, without a public hearing, each year thereafter if certain conditions are met.

An Operating Plan is required to be submitted as a part of the Use Permit application. The Operating Plan must specify the manner in which operations will be handled, how security will be provided, the number of employees, number of patients, hours and days of operation, and the maximum size of secure product storage area. Additionally, the Operating Plan must specify that the dispensary will require a doctor's written recommendation in compliance with state law, as well as a photo identification, for any person entering the site. Additional information may be required.

Required Application Materials: A complete application must include all of the following:

1. Planning application form [PJR-001](#), signed by all property owners.
2. Proposal Statement. This should be a one or two page letter fully describing the current use of the property and how you propose to change it. This should include information regarding the kind of use, the structures proposed, magnitude or size of the use, the intensity of the use and the frequency of the use, generally. Discuss changes in noise, traffic and site appearance that will result from the proposal, quantified where possible. Indicate any planned future use beyond the present proposal.
3. Site Plan. Provide three full-sized site plans (either 24 in. X 36 in. or 11 in. X 17 in.). All plans must be legible, drawn to scale and folded to 8 ½ in. x 11 in. Preparation of the required site plan by a draftsman, architect, landscape architect or engineer is strongly recommended. Site Plans must include, at a minimum, the information required on the Minimum Standard Site Plan, Form [CSS-019](#). If the existing site is to be significantly modified by the proposed project (i.e. removal of existing buildings, extensive grading and removal of vegetation), both an Existing Site Plan and a Proposed Site Plan should be submitted.
4. Handicap Accessibility. New construction and remodeling of, or additions to, existing facilities must meet State of California accessibility requirements. Applicants can discuss such requirements at the Building/Plan Check cubicle.

Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department

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5. Parking. New and/or expanded uses must meet Zoning Code on-site parking requirements (Article 86), and parking lot layouts must conform to the dimensions shown in the Off-Street Parking Design Standards (Article 82).
6. Reduced Site Plan. Provide one reduced-size site plan (8 ½ in. X 11 in.). This Reduced Site Plan must clearly depict the information shown on the full-sized Site Plan.
7. Location/vicinity Map. Provide one 8 ½ in. X 11 in. location/vicinity map (locator map or road map) showing where the project is located in relation to nearby lots, streets, and highways.
8. Assessor's Parcel Map. Provide one 8 ½ in. X 11 in. copy of the current Assessor's Parcel Map with the project site shown. Maps may be obtained from the County Assessor's Office or PRMD.
9. USGS quad map with the site outlined. Provide one 8 ½ in. X 11 in. excerpt of a USGS quad map with the project site identified. Maps may be obtained from PRMD. Check current fee schedule for cost.
10. Filing fee - see the current PRMD Project Review Fee Schedule.

Development Standards:

1. The site may not be located within 1000 feet from a school, park, or other youth-oriented facility.
2. The site may not be located within 1000 feet from another dispensary, 500 feet from a smoke shop, or 100 feet from a residence unless certain findings of physical separation can be made.
3. No on-site consumption is allowed. No signs advertising the product are allowed.
4. All operators or employees must be qualified patients or primary care givers.
5. Required parking: 2 spaces, plus 1 space for every 200 square feet of floor area and 1 space for each employee on maximum shift. A minimum of 5 off-street parking spaces is required.