Your Guide To Submitting A Cannabis Facility License Application PHASE II

Cannabis Application PHASE II Overview

What is Phase II?

Phase II of the San Diego County Cannabis Licensing Application is the Land Use and Environmental process. Approval of Phase I is required before Phase II can be submitted.

Applicants are required to submit detailed plans for the proposed cannabis facility during Phase II to Cannabis Licensing, the Zoning Division, the Building Department, and all other applicable County departments for review and permit issuance of either a Zoning Verification or Administrative Permit.

What You Need To Know About Phase II

Phase II of the application process requires land use, building, and any required environmental reviews. This review involves submitting plans and addressing requirements like odor control, setbacks, security and lighting plans, a neighborhood complaint process, and a plot plan.

Submittal requirements vary based on the type of use proposed and require review and approval from multiple departments and divisions. See Phase II Application Checklist on page 4 for specifics.

Permitting Steps

1. Submission
All required documents must be submitted in person at 5510 Overland Ave, Suite 210, San Diego, CA 92123. All submittals require an appointment. Please schedule an appointment by calling 619-346-0150 or 619-346-0097 or emailing Cannabis.Licensing@sdcounty.ca.gov, available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

2. County Review
Staff will review your application to check for accuracy and completeness.

3. Correction Requests
If anything is missing or unclear, you will receive a request for corrections or additional information. You must respond within the timeframe provided. Requests may come from multiple departments depending on the scope of work.

4. Submittal to Other Agencies
If your application meets all requirements, you will be approved to submit your plans to the appropriate Department. If not, you may need to revise and resubmit.

5. DCC Local Authorization Form
A local authorization form will be issued to all applicants who complete the Phase II requirements, allowing them to proceed with the application for the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) Cannabis License. Approval from both DCC and the County is required before operations.

Additional Information

Applicants are encouraged to use licensed professionals to prepare plans (e.g., architects, engineers, security consultants). Plans should be checked against San Diego County's Code of Regulatory and Zoning Ordinances for Cannabis Facilities Infrastructure Requirements. Applicants should also keep copies of all submitted materials and correspondence.

Cannabis Application Process: PHASE II Flow Chart

1. SUBMIT

Submit required documents (see next page for full list).

2. PAY

Pay for Phase II application fee.

3. CONSULTATION

Attend in-office consultation with Cannabis Licensing.

4. SUBMIT PLANS

Submit plans to applicable County Departments (i.e. Building, Zoning).

5. LAND USE & BUILDING PERMITS

Land Use and Building Permits are issued.

6. LOCAL AUTHORIZATION FORM

Cannabis Licensing issues provisional Local Authorization Form. Proceed to Phase III.

ADULT RECREATIONAL AND/OR MEDICAL CANNABIS BUSINESS APPLICATION PHASE II CHECKLIST

PHASE II APPLICATION PROCESS:

Enclosed is an Phase II application for an Adult Recreational and Medical Cannabis Facility Operating Certificate. Please read and review it carefully. If you choose to submit this application, complete all sections of the application and the forms attached. Please contact the Cannabis Licensing, Enforcement & Permitting Program at Phase I Guidance Document (858) 694-2705, or email Cannabis.Licensing@sdcounty.ca.gov to schedule an appointment between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The interview and application process may take up to two hours. Applications shall be submitted to Planning & Development Services in person at the Cannabis Licensing counter located at 5510 Overland Ave., Suite 210, San Diego, CA 92123.

Fees will be collected at the time your application is submitted.

Per Uniform Licensing Procedure §21.106 the Phase II Application fee is non-refundable.

DOCUMENTATION:

You will need to submit the following documents with your completed application:

1		Cannabis Facility License Phase II Application
2		Proof of Ownership, Lease Agreement, "Letter of Intent" to Lease or Owner Permission Letter
3		Lighting Plan - Addressing Security Lighting Requirements set in SDCCRO §21.2504
4		Operations Plot Plan of Cannabis Regulated Business
5		Security Plan (Details Methods addressing infrastructure requirements set in SDCCRO §21.2504)
6		Neighborhood Compatibility Plan addressing requirements set in SDCCRO §21.2504
7		Site, Building & Floor Plans for Building & Grading Permit
8		Odor Mitigation Plan Addressing Odor Control Requirements set in SDCCRO §21.2504

If there are other questions, please call Planning & Development Services Code Compliance at (858) 694-2705.

San Diego County PDS

Department of Cannabis Control

Administrative and Zoning Verification Permits

A Zoning Verification Permit (ZVP) from San Diego County is a permit issued by the County's Planning & Development Services (PDS) Zoning Department that confirms whether a specific property is zoned for proposed land use as a cannabis business and meets required buffers.

An Administrative Permit issued by the San Diego County Zoning Department is a discretionary land use permit required for certain cannabis facilities to ensure the proposed facility complies with zoning regulations and community planning groups before the facility can operate.

These permits confirm that the property:

- Is located within an eligible zone (such as specified industrial or commercial zoning districts).
- Meets the proximity requirements (e.g., distance from schools, parks, daycare centers, residential zones).
- Complies with the County's Zoning Ordinance and other relevant land use regulations.

Can I Operate a Cannabis Facility without a ZVP or an Administrative Permit?

All cannabis facilities are subject to the Zoning verification or Administrative requirement. If your facility fails to meet the criteria set out in the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, an Administrative Permit shall be required**.**

Approval of the ZVP does not grant operators the authority to operate a cannabis facility. A license from PDS and the Department of Cannabis Control is needed to operate.

What Authorized Cannabis Activities require a Zoning Verification Permit?

- Cannabis Storefront
- Non-Storefront Retail (Does not include Consumption Lounges)
- Cannabis Distribution
- Cannabis Cultivation(< 5,000 sq.t)
- Cannabis Manufacturing
- Cannabis Testing Laboratory
- Temporary Cannabis Events

What Authorized Cannabis Activities require a Administrative Permit?

- Outdoor Cannabis Cultivation > 5,000 sq. ft.
- Storefront retail with Consumption Lounge
- Any facility not meeting the Zoning Verification Permit Requirements
- Indoor or Mixed Light Cultivation (Greenhouses)
- Microbusiness

Zoning Verification Permit Requirements

1. Ensure the proposed cannabis facility site or location is not in a special area designator.

2. Any ground disturbance of the proposed site/location does not trigger a discretionary permit. Discretionary permits require an environmental review and multi-agency approval.

3. When submitting for a Zoning Verification Permit all applicants shall submit the following reports prepared by a qualified professional:

ZVP Standards

a. Reconnaissance-Level Biological Resources Letter
b. Historic Resource Letter - Structures over 45+ years old
c. Groundwater Analysis - Facilities that use Groundwater
d. Will-Serve Utility Letter - Facilities using Municipal water
e. Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis
f. Cannabis Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

For assitance with the Zoning Verification Permit contact Zoning at (858) 694 - 8985 or by email at PDSZoningPermitCounter@sdcounty.ca.gov

Odor Mitigation Plan For Cannabis Facilties

An odor mitigation plan is a detailed strategy designed to control and reduce the odor associated with cannabis cultivation, processing, and storage. Cannabis Facilities are required to submit an odor mitigation with their application per San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances SDCCRO SECTION 21.2510 (6). Before submitting, all applicants must have the Odor Mitigation plans reviewed and prepared by a professional engineer or a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH).

General Requirements

- Description of on-site odor sources
- Description of air treatment system or Best Management Practices BMP
- Facility Floor Plan
- Complaint Tracking System
- Certification by CIH or Engineer

Do I need an Odor Mitigation Plan if my facility doesn't produce any odors?

YES. If your cannabis facility doesn't require an odor treatment system, then operators will have to create a detailed plan explaining why it is not necessary.

What are examples of primary sources of odor within the facility?

- Flowering Rooms
- Drying and Curing Areas:
- Consumption Lounges
- Waste Storage and Handling
- Extraction and Processing Areas
- Storage of Cannabis Products

What is a Air Treatment System or Best Management Practice?

An air treatment system or Best Management Practice (BMP) for odor mitigation refers to a combination of technologies and protocols designed to effectively control and reduce cannabis odors before they leave the facility. Several examples include:

- Carbon Filtration System
- Ozone Generator
- Sealed Rooms & Containment
- Routine Maintenance of HVAC equipment
- Negative Air Pressure
- Air Scrubbers

Where Do I Submit My Application?

Applicants looking to submit shall supply two (2) hard copies of the certified Odor Mitigation Plan along with a complete application packet to Cannabis Licensing located at 5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 210 San Diego CA 92123 or submit digitally at Cannabis.Licensing@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Key Details

On-Site Odor Sources
Per SDCCRO § 21.2510 (6)(B)(a) the plan should describe odor-emitting activities or processes that take place on the premises. Operators must list a source such as mature cannabis plants in the flowering stage and the location from which they're emitting e.g. flowering room.

Facility Floor Plan
The Floor plan should include the layout of the entire facility with locations of onsite odor sources and emissions specified. Relevant information should include any BMPs, doors, windows, ventilation systems etc.

Professional Certification
All Odor Management Plans must be prepared by a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) or Engineer prior to submital.

Best Management Practices
For each on-site odor source operators must describe the administrative and engineering BMP controls. Including but not limited to the following:

- Administrative Procedures
- Staff Trainings
- Record Keeping/Forms
- Evidence that BMP's are sufficient to eliminate odors (*See Professional Certification)*
- BMP System Design
- BMP Operational Processes
- BMP Maintenance Plan

Cannabis Smoking Room Ventilation Plan
Consumption Lounges Only - Odor Mitigation Requirements

To obtain a Type B Consumption Lounge License in San Diego County, applicants must submit a Cannabis Smoking Room Ventilation Plan. The plan must be signed and stamped by a licensed mechanical engineer and demonstrate compliance with County ventilation and air quality standards, prior to submission to the Building Department.

Can my Designated Smoking Room be placed outdoors?

NO. The cannabis smoking room must remain within the existing and permitted building and must be fully enclosed, separated by solid partitions with self-closing, gasketed doors. It must not be directly accessible from the main entrance or visible from the street. Smoking areas shall not overlap with employee workspaces

General Plan Requirements

Air Quality and Safety Standards

Must meet MERV (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) 11 filtration standards (Particle Matter (PM) 2.5 protection), maintain negative air pressure at all times, and include 100% air exhaust through odor and pollution control units to eliminate all detectable smoke and odor.

Ventilation Details

Include air change rates, filter types, HVAC specs, and exhaust outlet locations (minimum 15 feet from buildings). A minimum of 60 cubic feet per minute(CFM) of supply air per smoker is required.

System Requirements

Air intakes and exhaust outlets shall be compliant with California Mechanical Code Sections 502.2.2 Other Product Conveying Termination requirements. The smoking room ventilation system must comply with CMC Sections 505 Product Conveying Systems requirements.

Ventilation must be self-contained and have a separate heating, ventilation and air-conditioning HVAC system causing no air recirculation into other areas within the cannabis business.

Operations and Maintenance Plan

The Cannabis Smoking Room Ventilation Proposal must include a description of the Operations and Maintenance plan for the ventilation system and methods for recordkeeping to ensure that the Operations and Maintenance Plan is followed. The O & M Manuel must be kept onsite at all times and reviewed annually.

Additional Requirements

Must include signage, usage area breakdown, maximum occupancy, and complaint resolution procedures for employees and the public.

Professional Certification

All Cannabis Smoking Room Plans must be prepared by a certified mechanical engineer prior to submittal.

Security Plan & Infrastructure Requirements

San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances SEC. 21.2526 requires all new commercial cannabis facilities to develop a security plan that outlines how the business will implement measures to control the facility. The security plan shall be submitted along with the cannabis application during Phase II of the process.

General Requirements

Under San Diego Counties Regulatory Ordinances, licensed cannabis facilities shall describe in full detail the following:

- Surveillance system approved by San Diego County Sheriff's Department (SDSO) license, 24-hour centrally monitored video surveillance system stored in a secured location.
- Contract including California Bureau of Security & Investigative Services (BSIS) licensed Security Personnel.
- Prevention plan of unauthorized access through entrances, exits, doors and windows.

**Security plan must be prepared/certified by a qualified professional.*

Closed-Circuit Television Monitoring System

Surveillance equipment shall provide a continuous 24-hour operation and recording with a minimum archive period of 14 days. Recordings must be date and time stamped.

- Cameras shall be positioned with enough coverage, angles, and lighting to clearly capture the facial features of individuals:
  - Inside any area where cannabis is stored, processed, or handled.
  - Immediately outside entry points such as doors, windows, or other potential access areas.
- Access to Footage
  - Specified time frame surveillance recordings shall be readily available upon inspection to the County Director, authorized staff, or law enforcement upon request.

Security Personnel

Shall be on-site during business hours and at least 21 years of age. (SDCCRO SEC 21.2527 Licensed retailers may operate between the hours of 7:00 AM - 10:00 PM). All security guards must be uniformed and hold a valid BSIS license.

Access & Door Security

Unauthorized Access

The detailed security plan shall explain security measures taken to prevent access to entrances, exits, windows, roofs etc...

Glass Doors or Doors with Glass Panels

Shall have shatter-resistant film applied to prevent breakage

Double Doors

- Three-point locking hardware
- Push-bars per Fire Authority Having Jurisdiction fire code

Entrances & Exits

Emergency Exits Shall be:

- Self Closing & Self Locking
- Equipped with alarm system
- Used only in emergencies

Entrance/Exits Shall be:

- Visible from a public place
- Clearly marked/labeled

Hardware

Aluminum Doors shall include:

- Steel inserts at lock receptacles

Outward Opening Doors shall be equipped with:

- Hinge Stud Kits
- Welded Hinges
- Set-screw Hinge Pins

Emergency Exits:

- Push-bar (“panic bar”) hardware
- Hinge-pin tamper deterrents
- 12-inch Latch guards made of at least 0.125-inch-thick steel, extending 6 inches above and below the latch, and mounted with non-removable bolts
- Guards must cover the door-to-jamb gap effectively
- Solid Core

Neighborhood Compatibility Plan

San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances SEC. 21.2526 requires all new commercial cannabis facilities to develop a Neighborhood Compatibility Plan that outlines how the business will minimize any nuisance impacts on the surrounding community.

Neighborhood Compatibility Plan Requirements

- Commitment to Neighborhood Compatibility plan Agreement
- Comprehensive List of Neighboring businesses or residents
- On-site Community Relations Representative or staff person
- Complaint Response Procedures

What Kinds of Complaints Should Be Included in The React and Response Procedures?

The React and Response procedures should include a standard operational procedure (SOPs) on how to address complaints received against a facility. SOPs should also be incorporated into routine employee training. San Diego County will evaluate for complaints from the public.

Does the Neighborhood Compatibility Plan need to be Updated Periodically?

The Cannabis Licensing team reviews neighborhood compatibility plans annually for its effectiveness. If San Diego County determines the plan has been proven to be ineffective, cannabis facilities will have to update it accordingly.

Key Details In The Neighborhood Compatability Plan

1. Community Relations Liaison

- Identify the staff person in charge of community relations by name, job title and contact information
- This individual is responsible for executing the React and Response procedures in the event of a public nuisance or complaint incident.

2. Neighboring Properties

- Having a list of all neighboring properties and contact information will help cannabis businesses proactively avoid becoming a nuisance and provide a direct line of communication with responsible individuals

3. React and Response Procedures

- The purpose of these SOPs is to establish a consistent and effective process for receiving, documenting, investigating, and resolving complaints related to the cannabis facility.
- It shall outline the appropriate methods for addressing and correcting issues identified through complaints, ensuring regulatory compliance and continuous improvement.

Lighting Plan

In accordance with SDCCRO Ch. 25 SEC 21.2510 (a)(3)(B) Application Submittal Requirements, cannabis facilities shall submit a Lighting Plan that shows how exterior and interior lights will provide adequate security lighting.

Guide to Lighting Plan

When developing a lighting plan as part of the security measures for a cannabis facility, property owners should ensure that all outdoor lighting provides adequate visibility for safety and surveillance without creating excessive glare or light spill onto neighboring properties.

Lighting should be strategically placed to cover entrances, exits, parking areas, and perimeter fencing, and shall comply with SDCZO lighting ordinances, including shielding to prevent upward light emissions and adherence to dark sky standards when applicable.

Consulting with qualified lighting and security professionals is recommended to design a compliant and efficient system.

Business Operations Plan

San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances SEC. 21.2510 requires all new commercial cannabis facilities to develop a Business Operations Plan that outlines how the business will operate in compliance with County code, state law, and all other applicable regulations.

Business Operations Plan Requirements

- Plan for transportation of all cannabis products to and from site
- Plans to handle cash
- Certificate of Commercial General Liability Insurance and Endorsement
- Recent Annual Budget

Will the Business Operations Plan be reviewed before a cannabis facility can operate?

Yes. The Business Operations Plan is reviewed as part of the Cannabis Licensing permit review process to ensure the proposed facility can comply with applicable County and State requirements before operations begin. The Business Operations Plan is reviewed on a continuous basis even after the initial review process.

Does the Business Operations Plan need to be updated if the business operations change?

Significant operational changes, including changes to security procedures, transportation methods, ownership, or business activities, may require updates to the approved Business Operations Plan and additional County review. Depending on the nature of the proposed changes, review by other County departments and separate applications or permits may also be required.

Are cannabis transportation and cash handling procedures required to be included in the plan?

Yes. Applicants shall provide procedures describing how cannabis products and cash will be securely handled, stored, and transported in accordance with SDCCRO requirements.

Key Details In The Business Operations Plan

1. Commercial General Liability Insurance

- Applicants will need to supply a certificate and any supporting documentation demonstrating adequate coverage for the proposed cannabis facility
- This certificate of commercial general liability insurance shall include any applicable endorsements verifying the cannabis operation itself is covered

2. Recent Annual Budget

- The Business Operations Plan shall include the Annual Operating Budget. This is reviewed on an annual basis. The budgetshould reflect the anticipated operational costs necessary to maintain ongoing business operations

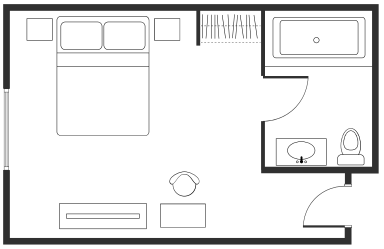
3. Cash Handling & Cannabis Transportation Procedures

- All cannabis businesses including Microbusiness, non-storefront/storefront retail, cultivation, distribution, manufacturing, and testing laboratories shall develope procedures for cannabis transport and cash handling.
- It shall outline the appropriate methods for inventory transfer, deliveries, pick-ups, vehicle security, chain-of-custody and storage during transport
- The Business Operations plan shall include specific details for how operators will handle all cash transactions, storage, security, and transport procedures.

Building Plan Requirements - Building Division

Floor plans are detailed drawings that show the layout of a building's interior spaces, including walls, doors, windows, and the intended use of each area. In the building permit process, floor plans are used to ensure the proposed construction or improvements meet code requirements for safety, accessibility, and proper use. **All plans shall be submitted to Cannabis Licensing prior to the Building Division.**

What are the Plan Submittal Requirements for Building Division?



There are minimum essential requirements that must be included to begin the Plan Check Review Process. Basic examples include:

- Site Plan
- Proposed Floor Plan
- Existing Floor Plan
- Electrical, Mechanical & Plumbing plans
- Elevations
- Plot Plan
- Cross Section
- Title Sheet

Do I need a Floor Plan if I'm using an Exisiting Building?

YES. Even if a new cannabis facility is using an existing commercial structure, a floor plan is still required because the intended use of the space is changing and must comply with cannabis specific regulations. Floor plans help the County verify that the layout supports safe operations. They also ensure that any required modifications like installing security systems, ventilation, or odor control are clearly identified and reviewed during the building permit process. A change of use for a building requires a Tenant Improvement Permit.

Minimum Essential Plan Requirements

Who can I contact for Building Division Plan Requirements?

Applicants can contact the San Diego County Building Division at (858) 565-5920 or PDSBuildingPermitCounter@sdcounty.ca.gov for questions about facility plan requirements and permitting. **Scan QR Code for PDS 658**

Do my plans need to include the cannabis facility infrastructure requirements?

YES. Including these infrastructure elements on your floor plan ensures your facility is designed for cannabis use from the start. It allows County reviewers to assess whether your project meets code, zoning, and licensing requirements helping avoid costly revisions or delays later in the permitting process.

Do my plans need to prepared by a professional?

YES. A certified professional is needed to prepare the floor, odor mitigation, and security plan to ensure compliance with building and cannabis regulatory codes for permits and construction. Their expertise helps prevent costly errors, ensures safety, and streamlines coordination with other professionals involved in the project.

Do my plans need a Stamp from Cannabis Licensing?

YES. The Building Division will not begin the plan check review process without the proper approval from the Cannabis Licensing Team. Any plans missing the stamp will be denied.

Please note the following: Due to the complexity of this project, allow ample time for project completion. All cannabis facilities require a Building Permit prior to operating. Any Corrections provided by the Building Division resulting in a change to Floor Plans will require an update to the Cannabis Licensing Phase II Application.