

Where to Buy Recreational Cannabis in Ohio Starting This Week

Nearly 100 Ohio Dispensaries Set to Open for Recreational Cannabis Sales

Nearly 100 dispensaries in Ohio will be able to open their doors to adult consumers starting Tuesday, regulators have announced. The Division of Cannabis Control (DCC) said on Monday that it will be issuing 98 certificates of operation to existing medical marijuana dispensaries that applied for dual licenses, allowing them to serve both the medical and recreational markets. This move comes about a month ahead of a deadline to approve hybrid shops after voters approved legalization at the ballot last November.

Anticipation and Preparations for Launch

It is not yet clear how many of the businesses that receive the certificates will launch adult-use sales on Tuesday, but several have announced their plans to do so. Among these are multi-state operators such as Cresco Labs, AYR Wellness, and Curaleaf.

The DCC indicated that dispensaries with provisional dual licenses that have not yet obtained a certificate of operation likely submitted incomplete applications. These applications will need to be resolved before they can start serving patients and adult consumers.

Regulatory Compliance and Consumer Guidance

State regulators confirmed last week that they were prepared to clear select businesses to open following inspections to ensure compliance with the state's legalization law. The DCC also created an online map where adult-use consumers can view a list of approved dispensaries.

Ahead of the launch, regulators distributed supplemental guidance on the rules for opening day events, advertising, and more. Prior to the retailer licensing development, the DCC began issuing dual certificates of operation for marijuana growers, processors, and testing labs so they could work with both medical and recreational cannabis.

Regulations for Opening Day

The DCC has reminded prospective dual licensees of what they can and cannot do to mark their opening day. Businesses cannot allow on-site consumption, offer samples, have music or food trucks outside, promote the opening with celebratory decor on the exterior, or hold ribbon-cutting ceremonies outside. However, they are permitted to have music inside (not live performances), offer complimentary non-alcoholic beverages, and hold ribbon-cutting ceremonies inside the dispensary.

Before a dispensary could secure a certification, applicants with provisional licenses needed to prove that they had updated their point-of-sale technology to distinguish between medical cannabis and adult-use sales,

enhance security, and verify that they could maintain an adequate supply for patients.

Steps Taken by Regulators

Applications for the dual licenses opened about a month after the legislature's Joint Committee On Agency Rule Review (JCARR) gave final approval to the proposed cannabis regulations for the adult-use market. This approval followed the legalization law voters passed last November.

Governor Mike DeWine (R) does not personally support legalization but has criticized the delay in access to regulated products since voters made that choice and possession became legal in December. Legislative leaders had discussed expediting sales but faced disagreement within the GOP-controlled legislature.

Looking Ahead

As regulators finalize the rules for the adult-use market, they implemented a change in February allowing medical marijuana patients and caregivers to obtain or renew their registrations for only one penny. This fee was then totally eliminated with a new rule adopted in May's JCARR meeting.

Following voter approval of legalization at the ballot, the Department of Commerce quickly published an FAQ guide for residents to learn about the new law and its timeline for implementation. Meanwhile, the governor has pressed the legislature to regulate the sale of intoxicating hemp-derived cannabinoids such as delta-8 THC.

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