

California Seizes \$316M in Illegal Cannabis Q1 2025

Over \$316 Million in Illicit Products and Nearly \$500,000 in Cash Seized in Q1 2025

California's enforcement agencies are ramping up efforts to root out illegal cannabis operations across the state. In the first quarter of 2025 alone, more than **\$316 million worth of unlicensed cannabis** and **\$474,000 in cash** have been seized, according to a recent announcement from Governor Gavin Newsom's office.

The crackdown is part of a broader initiative to bolster the legal cannabis industry while safeguarding public health and cracking down on criminal enterprises.

Thousands of Cannabis Plants, Dozens of Guns and Nearly 100 Warrants Signal Heightened Enforcement

Since January, California authorities have executed 99 warrants, leading to 29 arrests, the eradication of 212,681 illicit cannabis plants, and the seizure of 35 firearms. This surge in enforcement activity is part of a focused effort by the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) and the Unified Cannabis Enforcement Task Force, established in 2022.

Illegal Cannabis Threatens Consumer Safety and Market Integrity, Newsom Warns

"Unlicensed, unregulated products threaten consumer safety and jeopardize the integrity of this industry," Newsom added.

These products, often manufactured under unsafe conditions or with unverified ingredients, pose a risk to consumers and erode public trust in California's regulated cannabis system. Officials hope these seizures will deter illegal operators and send a strong message to those skirting state laws.

Multi-Agency Collaboration Key to Statewide Cannabis Seizures and Investigations

The wide-reaching operation involved a collaborative effort among several agencies, including:

California Department of Cannabis Control (DCC)

Unified Cannabis Enforcement Task Force

Department of Fish & Wildlife

California Department of Tax and Fee Administration

Department of Pesticide Regulations

Torrance and Oakland Police Departments

Alameda District Attorney's Office

Their combined efforts reflect a shift toward more coordinated enforcement, targeting both large-scale growers and smaller retailers operating outside the legal framework.

Crackdown on Hemp Products Continues With Thousands Seized From Retailers

California's enforcement isn't limited to cannabis. Since Governor Newsom's emergency order in September restricting most hemp-derived retail products, California's Alcoholic Beverage Control agents have visited 9,251 locations, confiscating over 7,000 hemp products from 141 violators.

The crackdown follows concerns about unregulated hemp-derived THC products flooding retail shelves, often marketed as legal alternatives to cannabis.

Temporary Ban on Hemp-Derived THC Extended Through at Least June 2025

In March, the California Department of Public Health extended the temporary ban on hemp-derived THC products with detectable levels of THC. The pause is expected to remain in place **at least through June**, as regulatory agencies continue to assess public safety risks and policy measures.

Over Half a Billion in Cannabis Seized in 2024, Though Estimates May Be Inflated

State officials reported a total seizure and/or eradication value of **\$544 million in unregulated cannabis** products during 2024. However, industry insiders often note that such government estimates may be inflated due to differing valuation methods for seized products.

Still, the overall message is clear: California is stepping up its efforts to dismantle the illicit cannabis market and reinforce its regulated, tax-paying cannabis industry.

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