

Cannabis Operators Alerted to Climate Driven Safety Risks

Global Guidance Highlights Cannabis Safety Risks From Climate Change, Urges Operators to Reassess Environmental and Operational Practices

The international cannabis industry is being called to action as new guidance released by global safety authorities highlights the increasing risks posed by climate change to cannabis cultivation, processing, and distribution. With rising temperatures, unpredictable weather patterns, and extreme events such as floods and wildfires, cannabis operators face operational, financial, and regulatory challenges that could have long-term implications for safety, product quality, and enterprise value.

Climate Change Is No Longer a Peripheral Concern for Cannabis Operations—It Directly Affects Safety and Risk Management

Historically, climate risks were treated as external factors for cannabis operators, managed primarily through basic environmental controls in greenhouses or indoor grow facilities. However, recent guidance from international bodies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) indicates that climate-related hazards now have a direct impact on occupational safety, worker health, and facility compliance.

Key risks identified in the guidance include heat stress for cultivation workers, increased mold and fungal outbreaks in crops due to higher humidity, and potential contamination from storm runoff or wildfire ash. These conditions not only affect product safety but can also increase the likelihood of workplace incidents, triggering workers' compensation claims and impacting insurance coverage.

Extreme Weather Events Are Shaping the Future of Cannabis Risk Assessment and Insurance Underwriting

Insurers and risk managers are paying closer attention to climate-related exposures in the cannabis sector. Facilities located in regions prone to hurricanes, wildfires, or flooding are being scrutinized for their preparedness and mitigation measures. According to the guidance, cannabis operators that fail to implement climate-resilient practices may face higher premiums or restricted access to coverage.

This includes adopting structural reinforcements for grow facilities, enhancing HVAC systems to maintain proper airflow and temperature control, and establishing emergency protocols for employees during severe weather events. Operators are also encouraged to integrate climate risk data into predictive safety analytics and loss-prevention programs, aligning with best practices in Environmental, Health, and Safety (EHS)

management.

Worker Health and Safety Must Be a Priority as Environmental Conditions Become More Volatile

One of the most significant concerns highlighted in the guidance is the effect of climate change on cannabis workers. Increased temperatures and humidity can lead to heat exhaustion, dehydration, and respiratory issues, particularly in indoor and greenhouse cultivation environments. Additionally, extreme weather events may disrupt water quality, air circulation, and sanitation protocols, creating unsafe conditions for staff.

Cannabis operators are advised to implement robust occupational safety training focused on climate-related hazards, provide protective gear suitable for extreme conditions, and monitor workers for signs of heat stress or exposure-related illnesses. Compliance with local labor and health regulations will become increasingly critical, as insurance companies and regulatory bodies evaluate whether operations are sufficiently mitigating climate-driven risks.

Climate Resilient Cannabis Cultivation Practices Offer Both Safety and Financial Benefits

Investing in climate-resilient infrastructure and operational practices is not only a safety imperative but also a strategic business decision. Operators that proactively address climate risks can reduce the frequency and severity of incidents, maintain consistent product quality, and strengthen their positioning with insurers.

Best practices recommended in the guidance include using temperature- and humidity-controlled growing systems, implementing advanced irrigation and drainage systems to prevent crop loss, and establishing redundant power and water sources to ensure continuity during environmental disruptions. These measures help protect employees, reduce liability, and ensure compliance with evolving EHS regulations.

International Safety Authorities Encourage Cannabis Operators to Treat Climate Risk as a Core Business Issue

The guidance emphasizes that climate change should no longer be considered a secondary concern for cannabis operators. Leaders in the industry are urged to embed climate risk management into strategic planning, operational workflows, and corporate governance. By doing so, they can not only safeguard employees and assets but also position themselves as “best-in-class” operators in the eyes of insurers, investors, and regulators.

For cannabis businesses, this includes performing regular risk assessments, documenting mitigation strategies, and incorporating climate-related metrics into executive reporting. The guidance also encourages collaboration with environmental experts, labor unions, and local authorities to enhance preparedness and response strategies.

Regulatory Scrutiny and Insurance Implications Make Climate Risk Management Urgent

The guidance notes that regulators and insurers are increasingly scrutinizing cannabis operators’ readiness for climate-related events. Facilities with inadequate safety measures may face higher premiums, reduced

coverage, or difficulty accessing specialized cannabis insurance programs. Conversely, operators that demonstrate proactive climate risk management are more likely to secure favorable underwriting terms, qualify for alternative risk financing programs, and protect their long-term enterprise value.

In addition, the guidance highlights the need for standardized documentation and reporting of climate-related risks and mitigation strategies. This data not only supports regulatory compliance but also helps operators communicate their commitment to safety and sustainability to stakeholders.

Industry Leaders Must Act Now to Align Safety Programs With Global Climate Risk Recommendations

As climate change accelerates, cannabis operators that fail to adapt their safety and operational strategies may face heightened financial, legal, and reputational risks. The guidance calls for a paradigm shift: treating environmental and worker safety as integrated, proactive components of enterprise risk management rather than reactive compliance obligations.

Operators are advised to:

- Update EHS training programs to address climate-related hazards
- Implement monitoring systems for environmental conditions affecting crops and workers
- Develop emergency preparedness and response plans for extreme weather events
- Collaborate with insurers to align safety programs with underwriting expectations

Proactive Climate Safety Measures Will Define Success for Cannabis Operators in 2026 and Beyond

The new international guidance underscores that climate change is a material risk for the cannabis industry, impacting worker safety, product quality, and insurance outcomes. Operators who integrate climate resilience into their EHS programs are better positioned to protect employees, maintain insurability, and secure long-term enterprise value.

With the global cannabis market continuing to grow, incorporating climate risk management is no longer optional—it is a strategic imperative that can determine whether a business thrives or struggles in a rapidly evolving regulatory and environmental landscape.

For more insights, tools, and resources to ensure your cannabis operation is prepared for climate and safety risks, visit www.cannabisriskmanager.com.

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