



[Home](#) > [Government](#) > [About the Government of Alberta](#) >
[Alberta's approach to cannabis legalization](#) >

Alberta Cannabis Framework and proposed legislation

Our framework and legislation set the stage for the legal and responsible use of cannabis by Albertans.

Cards are not displayed in print mode

Overview

The Alberta Cannabis Framework outlines what Albertans can expect when cannabis becomes legal in our province by next July.

After months of engagement with Albertans, stakeholders and partners, extensive research of other jurisdictions, and consideration of our existing liquor and tobacco laws, the framework sets the stage for the responsible use of cannabis in our province.

Aspects of this framework will be implemented through proposed amendments to various pieces of legislation during fall 2017 and spring 2018, including substantive changes to the *Gaming and Liquor Act* that will address oversight, distribution and licensing for non-medical cannabis. To properly reflect this, the proposed amendments will include renaming the act to the *Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act*.

Next steps

Introduced this fall:

- [Bill 26: An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis](#) was introduced Nov 16, 2017. If passed, it would give the AGLC authority for oversight, compliance and retail licensing, enable online sales, and create restrictions on youth possession and public consumption.
- [Bill 29: An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving](#) was introduced Nov 14, 2017. If passed, it would support provincial efforts to address drug-impaired driving and establish zero tolerance for those on graduated licences.

To be developed in the new year:

- Support regulations about the sale of cannabis, including licensing criteria and other rules for private retailers.

To be introduced in spring 2018:

- Legislation around taxing authority, and further measures to address workplace safety issues (if required).

Download: [Alberta Cannabis Framework highlights and next steps](#) (0.3 MB)

Minimum age

Alberta will set the minimum age for purchase and consumption of cannabis at 18.

This is in line with Alberta's minimum age for purchasing and consuming alcohol and tobacco, as well as the federal government's proposed minimum age for legal cannabis.

Setting a minimum age of 18 will help balance the health risks to youth with the need to eliminate their interaction with a sophisticated and potentially dangerous illicit market.

A strong focus on public education will be an important tool to encourage responsible use and create awareness of cannabis's impact on health.

Safeguards for cannabis sales

Albertans of legal age will be able to purchase cannabis products from retailers that will receive their products from a government-regulated distributor.

The distribution system will be similar to the system Alberta currently has in place for alcohol.

Proposed legislation will provide authority for the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) to carry out oversight and compliance functions, as well as manage distribution of cannabis.

Government-regulated distribution will ensure a level playing field for large and craft producers, and prevents small communities from being penalized for delivery costs by making sure product is shipped at the same price no matter where it's going.

All physical retail locations will have strict government oversight through licensing by the AGLC. The AGLC will be able to set terms and conditions on licences, as well as inspect licensees and address any violations. This will help ensure private cannabis retailers operate responsibly and lawfully.

Licensed retail establishments will be the only stores that can sell cannabis, and will not be able to sell cannabis if they sell alcohol, tobacco or pharmaceuticals.

The proposed legislation will help keep cannabis out of the hands of young people by requiring purchasers to show ID if they appear under to be 25, not allowing minors to purchase cannabis or be on licensed premises.

The provincial government will establish rules that guide hours of operation and location of stores (for example, the minimum distance retail outlets must be from schools, community centres, liquor stores and each other), age of staff and training, and controlling initial growth in the number of outlets.

Staff who work at cannabis retail outlets would have to be at least 18 years of age and have appropriate training to educate customers about the potency of products and the risks associated with

cannabis use. Staff must also be trained to uphold the rules around the purchase of cannabis, including checking customers' identification to make sure they are of legal age.

Consumer education will be embedded in the retail of cannabis, and retail outlets will display point-of-purchase signage and other materials to educate customers about risks and making responsible choices about cannabis.

Details on private cannabis retail, including the process and requirements for obtaining a licence, are expected in the new year.

Buying cannabis

Purchasing cannabis

Albertans will have two options for purchasing recreational cannabis:

- privately run retail stores
- government-operated online sales

Physical retail locations will be subject to government regulations and the terms of licenses granted by the AGLC, including the aforementioned details.

Full details on licensing and establishing a cannabis retail operation will be available in early 2018.

Online sales and home delivery will be operated by the government. This is in response to concerns raised by Albertans about the need for strict control over age verification processes during the initial sale and at time of delivery. It will also give Albertans confidence in their purchases, as there will be a single online source for recreational cannabis.

Though cannabis cafes and lounges will not be permitted on July 1, 2018, the proposed legislation also gives the authority to regulate these forms of establishments should government decide to allow them at a later date.

Taxing cannabis

Discussions are continuing with the federal government regarding the details of a coordinated approach to the taxation of cannabis.

Taxes must be kept low enough so that prices for legal cannabis are competitive with the illicit market.

At the same time, provinces and territories will need additional resources to address new costs related to the legalization of cannabis, whether through tax revenue or specific federal support.

Consuming cannabis

Albertans will be allowed to consume cannabis in their homes and in some public spaces where smoking tobacco is allowed, but use will be banned in cars.

In an effort to protect children and limit second-hand exposure, public smoking or vaping of cannabis in Alberta will be prohibited from any place where tobacco is restricted, and in the following places:

- on any hospital property, school property or child care facility property
- in or within a prescribed distance from:
 - a playground
 - a sports or playing field
 - a skateboard or bicycle park
 - a zoo
 - an outdoor theatre
 - an outdoor pool or splash pad
- from any motor vehicles, with the exception of those being used as a temporary residences, such as a parked RV

There will also be no consumption of cannabis at any cannabis retail outlets.

Proposed legislation will establish provincial offenses for public consumption infractions and consumption of cannabis in vehicles.

Municipalities may create additional restrictions on public consumption using their existing authorities.

- [Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act](#) (Section 3)

Growing cannabis

Under the proposed federal legislation, adults will be able to grow up to 4 plants per household from seeds purchased from licenced cannabis retailers.

Renters, condo-dwellers and those who live in multi-family dwellings may be restricted from growing cannabis in their homes based on rules established in rental agreements or condominium bylaws. Government will work to educate landlords, renters and condo boards on the options available to them.

Possessing cannabis

In Alberta, adults over 18 will be allowed to possess up to 30 grams of cannabis in a public place, which aligns with the federal government's proposed possession limit for adults.

When transporting cannabis in a vehicle, it must be secured in closed packaging and not within reach of the driver or occupants.

Young people — those under the legal age of 18 — will not be allowed to purchase or possess any cannabis.

This zero tolerance approach means that youth who possess more than 5 grams of cannabis will continue to be subject to criminal charges under the federal legislation.

Youth who possess 5 grams or less will not be subject to criminal charges (which could negatively impact their future), but will be subject to seizure of the cannabis, notification of parents or guardians, and penalties similar to those for underage possession of alcohol or tobacco.

Drug-impaired driving

Driving while impaired, whether by alcohol or cannabis or other drugs, is a serious crime and puts the safety of everyone at risk.

[Amendments to the Traffic Safety Act](#) have been proposed and will provide additional tools to address all forms of impaired driving.

Education will also continue to be a critical part of our strategy to address drug-impaired driving.

Government will create more public awareness about the risks of using cannabis and getting behind the wheel, and will inform Albertans that drug-impaired driving is still impaired driving, with the same consequences as driving while impaired by alcohol.

Impairment in workplaces

Workers who are impaired on the job – whether by alcohol or drugs – are a danger to their coworkers and themselves.

Alberta already has rules and programs in place to address impairment on the job and keep workers safe, but before July 2018 we will review occupational health and safety regulations and work with employers, labour groups and workers to ensure the rules continue to address impairment issues.

This may include developing additional regulations, education or training programs.

Advertising and packaging cannabis

The federal government has proposed strict rules about advertising, labelling and packaging cannabis.

This includes no promotion, packaging or labelling of cannabis that could be considered appealing to young people, and ensuring that important product information is clearly presented to consumers.

Restrictions on cannabis advertising and packaging will generally mirror what is in place today for tobacco. Advertising will be restricted to locations where there are no minors, and there will be limits on displays and in-store promotion.

Alberta will establish additional rules as needed to address any issues or gaps in policies should they arise.

- Next page: [What we heard](#)

Related

[Traffic Safety Act amendment to address drug-impaired driving](#)