

WAC 314-55-013 Voluntary cannabis licensee consultation and education program. (1) **Purpose and scope.** The purpose of this section is to:

(a) Establish a program for cannabis licensee consultation and education visits consistent with the requirements of RCW 69.50.342(3) and 69.50.561;

(b) Establish criteria for the provision of advice, consultation, and education visits including, but not limited to, recommendations on abating violations of this chapter;

(c) Ensure that advice, consultation and education visits are distinguished from inspections, technical visits, or investigations, and are limited to interpretation and applicability of standards in this chapter including, but not limited to, the conditions, structures, machines, equipment, apparatus, devices, materials, methods, means and practices in the licensee's licensed premise; and

(d) Advice, consultation, and educational visits provided under this program do not include business advice concerning issues that may include, but are not limited to, individual business operations, marketing, distribution, financing, profitability, or viability.

(2) **Definitions.**

(a) For purposes of this chapter, "a direct or immediate relationship to public health and safety" or "a direct or immediate risk to public health and safety" means, where the board can prove by a preponderance of the evidence:

(i) Diversion of cannabis product out of the regulated market or sales across state lines;

(ii) Furnishing of cannabis product to persons under 21 years of age;

(iii) Diversion of revenue to criminal enterprise, gangs, cartels, or parties not qualified to hold a cannabis license based on criminal history requirements;

(iv) The commission of noncannabis-related crimes; or

(v) Knowingly making a misrepresentation of fact to the board, an officer of the board, or an employee of the board related to the conduct or action that is, or is alleged to be, any of the violations identified in (a)(i) through (iv) of this subsection.

(vi) Violations outlined in WAC 314-55-509 (1)(a), (b), and (c), and more fully described in WAC 314-55-520, 314-55-521, and 314-55-522.

(b) The definitions contained in chapters 314-55 WAC and 69.50 RCW also apply to this section.

(3) **Request for consultation.**

(a) A cannabis licensee or their designee may make one request for advice and consultation per year by completing and submitting an application to request consultation through the board's website. Additional requests may be considered at the board's discretion.

(b) A board representative will schedule and complete advice and consultation visits within 45 calendar days of receipt of the request for consultation.

(i) If the cannabis licensee or designee, or the board representative requires more than 45 calendar days to schedule and complete the consultation visit, the board representative may extend the completion deadline.

(ii) If the deadline is extended, at the licensee's request, more than 60 days after the board's receipt of the request for consultation, the cannabis licensee must resubmit a request for consultation consistent with this section.

(4) Advice and consultation services.

(a) Advice and consultation services offered in connection with a request for consultation do not preclude informal requests, or usual and customary interactions between licensees, the board, or any board staff.

(b) Regulatory issues described in this chapter observed during the course of an advice, consultation, and education visit are not subject to disciplinary action unless the identified issue has a direct or immediate relationship to public health and safety.

(c) Advice, consultation, education, and any written report or documentation provided under this section is limited to the matters specified in the request for consultation. At the request of the licensee, a consultation may include:

(i) An initial meeting to explain the licensee's rights and obligations;

(ii) A walk-through visit to evaluate the compliance concerns specified in the request for consultation;

(iii) A closing meeting to discuss conditions noted during the initial visit to make recommendations;

(iv) A written report of conditions found in the cannabis licensee's place of business and any recommendations or agreements made; or

(v) A follow-up visit, if appropriate, to ensure that the conditions specified in the request for consultation have been satisfactorily abated.

(d) If an identified condition is not a direct or immediate risk to public health and safety, the condition will be documented in the appropriate database as part of the consultation visit, and will include the following:

(i) A detailed description of the condition that is not in compliance;

(ii) The full text of the specific section or subsection of the statute or rule applicable to the condition that is not in compliance;

(iii) A statement and complete description of the actions and steps the licensee or their designee must take to achieve compliance;

(iv) The date, method of service, name, and signature of the licensee, their designee, or both participating in the visit; and

(v) The date that the licensee or their designee must achieve compliance. This date may be mutually agreed upon by the board representative and the licensee or their designee, and may be based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to, the cost and severity of the conditions to be abated.

(e) A consultation report or notice to correct made by a board representative under this section is not a formal enforcement action.

(f) The board representative will provide the licensee or their designee with instructions regarding how to request an extension of time consistent with subsection (5) of this section.

(g) The board representative may perform a follow-up visit within 60 days of the mutually agreed upon compliance date based on the severity of the conditions described in this section.

(5) Licensee responsibilities.

(a) A cannabis licensee or their designee agrees to work with the board representative to schedule a consultation visit at a mutually agreed upon date and time.

(b) A cannabis licensee or their designee agrees to make reasonable efforts to correct or abate all conditions identified in the statement of conditions within the mutually agreed upon date and time.

(c) If a cannabis licensee or their designee is unable to correct or abate all of the conditions identified in the statement of conditions, the licensee or their designee may request an extension of time by submitting a written request. The written request must describe:

(i) The need for the extension;

(ii) Confirmation of the steps taken to abate the conditions described in the statement of conditions; and

(iii) A proposed abatement date.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 69.50.342 and 2022 c 16 § 168. WSR 22-14-111, § 314-55-013, filed 7/6/22, effective 8/6/22. Statutory Authority: RCW 69.50.342 and 69.50.561. WSR 20-21-056, § 314-55-013, filed 10/14/20, effective 11/14/20.]