

CNMI Cannabis Regulation Transition — Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

As of January 15, 2026

1) What is changing?

Cannabis regulatory functions previously handled by the Commonwealth Cannabis Commission will transition to the **CNMI Department of Commerce, Alcohol Beverage and Tobacco Control (ABTC) Division**.

2) What is not changing?

The cannabis laws and regulatory requirements remain in effect. Licensees and applicants must continue to follow all applicable requirements for licensing, operations, compliance, and enforcement.

3) When does the transition take effect?

The Executive Order becomes effective **60 days after submission to the Legislature**, unless modified or disapproved by a majority of each house. The Department anticipates the effective date will be **Sunday, January 18, 2026**, subject to the Legislature's constitutional review process.

4) When will ABTC be fully operational for cannabis matters?

Full operational implementation will begin Tuesday, January 20, 2026, because **Monday, January 19, 2026** is a holiday.

5) Where do I submit a new cannabis license application or a renewal?

At this time, applications for **new cannabis licenses and renewals will continue to be accepted at the Cannabis Office**:

Cannabis Office (Application Intake)

- **Address:** Ascension Street, Capitol Hill, **Building 1341**
- **Hours:** 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Phone:** (670) 488-0420

6) Will applications also be accepted at the One Stop Business Permitting Center?

The Department plans to transition cannabis application intake to the **One Stop Business Permitting Center** at a **later date**. The Department will provide public notice and instructions before that change is implemented.

7) Can I still submit applications before the effective date?

Yes. Applications may be submitted for **intake and processing**. Final regulatory actions will be implemented consistent with the Executive Order's effective date and the operational start date.

8) Will my existing license remain valid?

Yes. If you hold a valid license and remain in compliance, your license remains valid according to its terms and applicable requirements. Renewals must be submitted consistent with existing deadlines.

9) Will there be a "pause" in licensing or renewals during the transition?

The Department's objective is **no interruption of service**. Intake will continue at the Cannabis Office, and ABTC will implement internal workflows so processing continues through the transition.

10) Do I need to re-apply because the regulatory agency changed?

No. You do not need to re-apply solely because the administering authority changes. Continue to comply with existing requirements and renewal timelines.

11) Are the application forms changing?

In the near term, applicants should expect to use the **existing forms and requirements**. If ABTC updates forms for administrative clarity, the Department will provide notice and publish updated forms and instructions.

12) Will fees or payment procedures change?

Applicants should plan for **the same fees and requirements** unless officially changed by law or regulation. If payment procedures are updated, ABTC will provide clear instructions before implementation.

13) What happens to pending applications already submitted to the Cannabis Commission?

Pending applications will be **reviewed and processed** as part of the transition. Applicants may be contacted if additional documentation is needed or if there is a status update.

14) What about inspections and compliance checks?

Inspections and compliance checks will continue. ABTC will coordinate field operations and documentation to ensure consistent standards.

15) Who will conduct cannabis enforcement and compliance work?

ABTC will administer cannabis enforcement and compliance operations. ABTC is implementing a **phased on-the-job cross-training program** so that **all ABTC staff** can support cannabis enforcement and compliance operations as needed for continuity. **The Cannabis staff** will also be cross-trained on ABTC enforcement and compliance procedures to align standards and documentation practices.

16) If I have a question right now, who do I contact?

- **Cannabis Office (Application Intake):** (670) 488-0420
- **ABTC Director (General Contact):** David R. Maratita
Email: cnmi.abtc@commerce.gov.mp

17) Where can I submit complaints or report suspected violations?

You may report concerns by emailing cnmi.abtc@commerce.gov.mp or by submitting a written complaint at the Cannabis Office. Please include: business name, location, date/time, description, and any supporting information.

18) Will ABTC publish additional guidance?

Yes. The Department will publish additional guidance (including points of contact, forms/instructions, and process updates) as the effective date and operational start date approach.
