




Cannabis Retail Safety

Presented By BHHC Loss Control

August 2025

Crash into Massachusetts dispensary leaves employee, woman injured, police say.

Investigators said an SUV crashed into the dispensary near the southwest corner of the building and continued to travel inside the building, coming to rest inside the dispensary's retail space.



What do you need to do for Retail Worker Safety?

Same things you need to do for any employee's safety:

- Perform a risk assessment and determine the hazards your staff face
- Identify safe work procedures
- Create a formal Safety Programs
- Conduct hazard recognition activities
- Investigate incidents
- Train your staff
- Create accountability

Agenda

OSHA Cannabis Focus

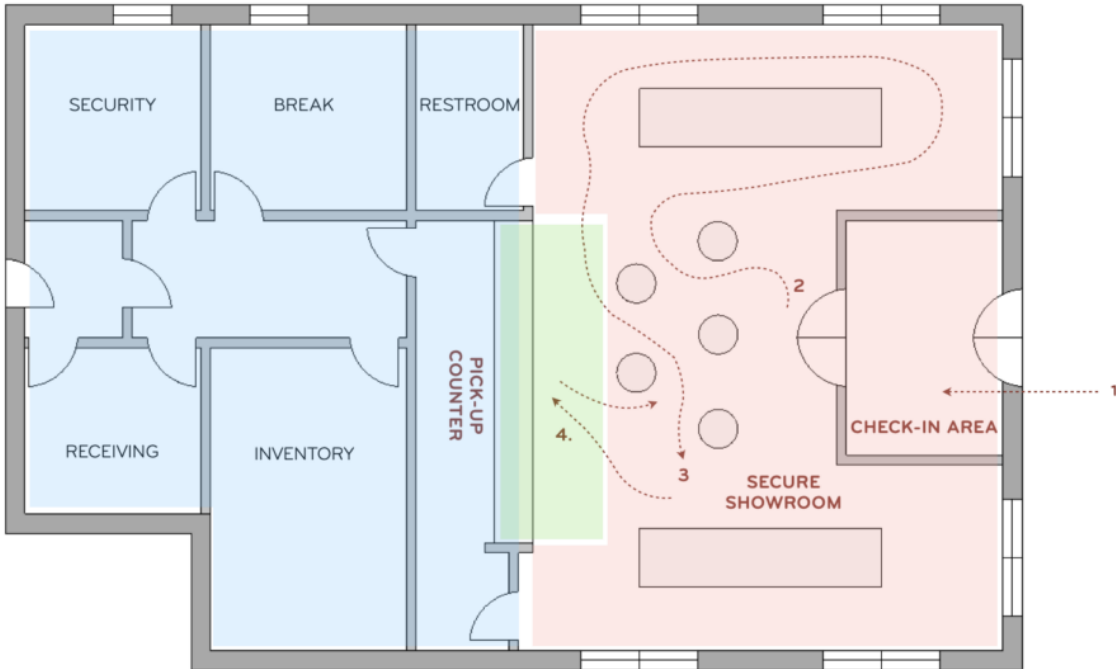
1. From Dispensary to “Buying Experience”
2. Cannabis Retail Operations Overview
3. Your Safety Plan – A Written Guide
4. Workplace Security and Robbery Prevention
5. Ergonomics and Repetitive Motion
6. Slips, Trips, and Falls
7. Chemical and Product Handling
8. Customer and Employee Interaction Safety
9. Fire Safety and Emergency Preparedness
10. Regulatory Compliance and Training
11. Mental Health and Wellness

The Transition from Dispensary to Retail

Category	Medical Cannabis Dispensary	Adult-Use Cannabis Retail Store
Primary Purpose	Serve patients with qualifying medical conditions	Serve adults (21+) for recreational or wellness use
Customer Requirements	Medical recommendation or cannabis ID card	Government-issued ID showing age 21+
Regulatory Oversight	Often under state health departments	Regulated by cannabis control boards or equivalent agencies
Product Potency & Formulation	Higher potency, condition-specific, often CBD-rich	Wider variety, lifestyle-oriented, often lower-dose options
Staff Training Focus	Emphasis on therapeutic guidance and patient care	Emphasis on product knowledge, customer service, and compliance
Store Design	Clinical, pharmacy-like, private consultation areas	Boutique or lifestyle-oriented, open product displays
Security Needs	High, but often lower foot traffic	High, with added crowd control and ID verification systems
Operational Complexity	Smaller scale, focused on patient care	Larger scale, high-volume sales, often part of multi-state operations

The Retail Cannabis Operation

OPEN RETAIL



Front-of-House (Sales Floor)

- Budtenders: Assist customers, provide product recommendations, ensure compliance with age verification.
- Shift Leads: Supervise daily operations, manage staff, handle escalations.
- Reception/Security: Check IDs, manage entry, monitor for safety and compliance.

Back-of-House (Inventory & Support)

- Inventory Specialists: Receive, log, and organize products; manage seed-to-sale tracking systems.
- Packaging Staff: Label and prepare products for display or sale (if allowed by state law).
- Compliance Officers: Ensure adherence to state regulations, maintain records, and audit procedures.

1. Guest checks in at security point
2. Guest is allowed into Secure room and is encouraged to wander freely, browsing dummy products on display
3. Guest fills out digital shopping cart on their mobile device while shopping, order is checked by an employee on the sales floor



The Retail Cannabis Operation

Operational Components

- Point-of-Sale System: Integrated with inventory and compliance tracking.
- Security Systems: Cameras, access controls, and alarm systems.
- Inventory Management: Real-time tracking, audits, and shrinkage prevention.
- Customer Experience: Loyalty programs, educational materials, and personalized service.



Point of Sale System



Security Systems

Management & Administration

- Store Manager: Oversees all operations, staffing, compliance, and financial performance.
- Assistant Manager: Supports the manager, handles scheduling, training, and customer service.
- Regional/District Manager: Oversees multiple locations, sets strategic goals, and ensures consistency.

Worker Characteristics

- Must be 21+ and pass background checks (varies by state).
- Trained in compliance, product knowledge, and customer service.
- CA both supervisors and employees must take OSHA 30
- Often work in fast-paced, high-security environments.
- May receive ongoing education on cannabis science, regulations, and sales techniques.

The Safety Management Plan

Different Places Different Requirements

Jurisdiction Matters for Safety Program Requirements



Injury & Illness Prevention Program

- California Written Program requirement for General Safety & Health Program



No Specific Requirements

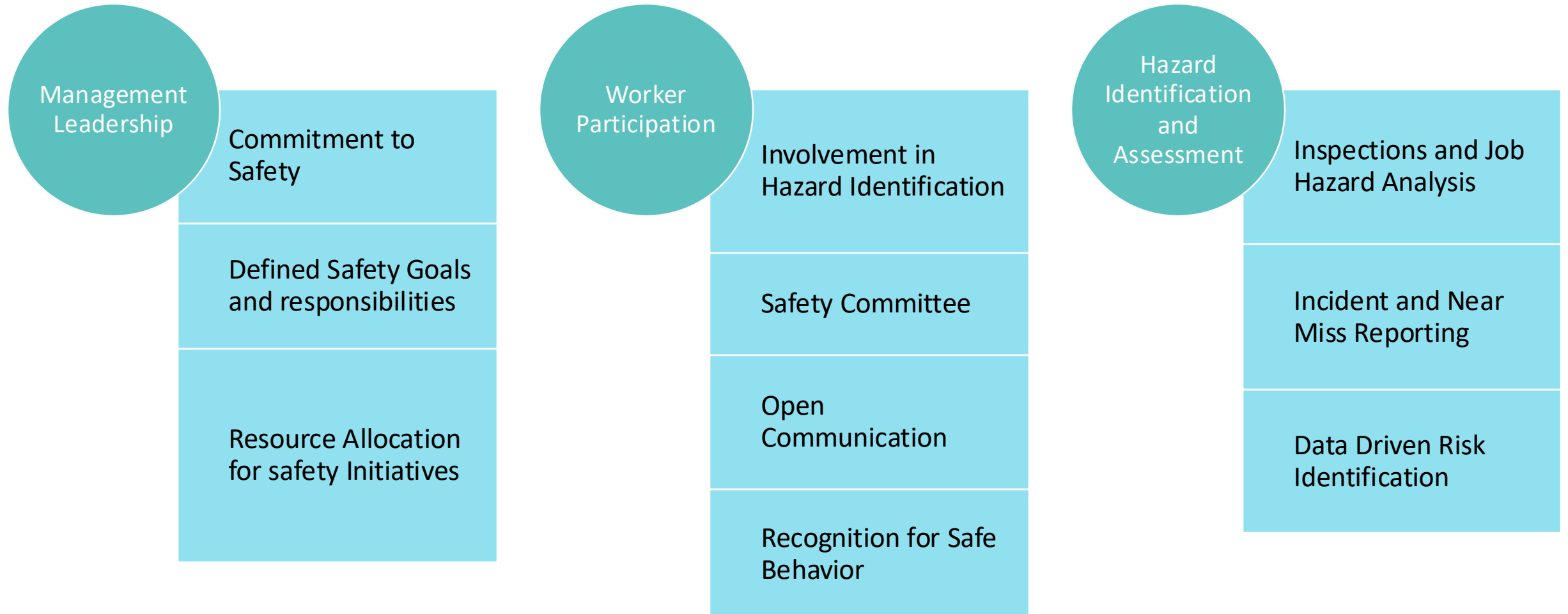
- General Duty Clause
- OSHA strongly encourages and provides guidance for developing a comprehensive safety and health program



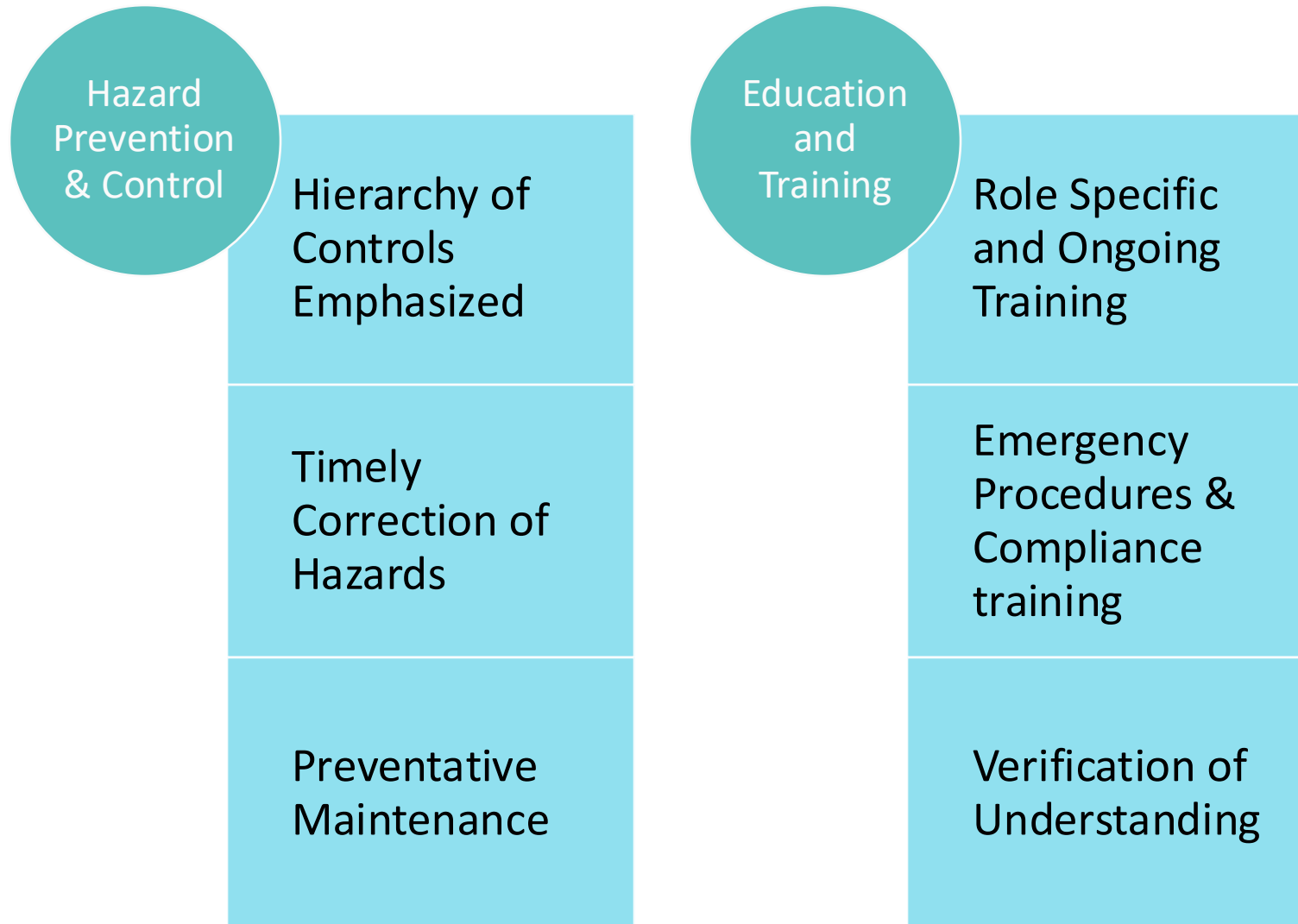
Other States

- Most states have some form of Safety Program Requirement
- Those that do not fall back on General Duty Clause like Federal OSHA

Safety Program Components 1-3



Safety Program Components 4-5



Safety Program Components 6-8

Communication & Coordination

Clear Safety communication

Coordination with contractors and vendors

Multilingual and culturally competent training

Program Eval & Improvement

Regular audits and reviews

Use of Safety Metrics

Update based on findings

Documentation & Recordkeeping

Accessible, Written Program

Records of training, inspections, and incidents

Digital Tracking and Reporting



Other Program Requirements

- Hazard Communication Program (HazCom)
- Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
- Fire Prevention Plan
- Heat Illness Prevention Plan
- Workplace Violence Prevention Plan (CA)
- COVID-19 Prevention Program (if applicable)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Program
- Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) Program (if applicable)
- Respiratory Protection Program
- Bloodborne Pathogens Program
- Sanitation and Pest Control Procedures

Specific Hazards and Controls

Workplace Security and Robbery Prevention

Cash Handling Protocols

- Limit cash exposure by using drop safes, regular cash pickups, and minimal till amounts.
- Train staff on discreet handling and counting procedures.

Surveillance Systems & Panic Alarms

- Install high-resolution cameras covering all entry points, sales areas, and storage.
- Panic buttons should be easily accessible but discreet.

Train for Robbery Response

- Teach staff to comply calmly, avoid sudden movements, and remember suspect details.
- Post-incident protocols should include debriefing and support.

Controlled Access to Restricted Areas

- Use keycards or biometric locks for back-of-house areas.
- Maintain visitor logs and restrict access to authorized personnel only.

Ergonomics and Repetitive Motion

Point-of-Sale (POS) Workstation Setup

- Ensure counters are at appropriate heights, screens are adjustable, and staff can alternate between sitting and standing.

Repetitive Tasks Like Packaging or Labeling

- Rotate tasks to reduce strain and provide ergonomic tools like label dispensers or wrist supports.




Standing for Long Periods

- Use anti-fatigue mats and encourage micro-breaks.
- Provide stools or leaning chairs where feasible.

Lifting and Stocking Procedures

- Train on proper lifting techniques and use carts or lifts for heavier items.
- Store heavier products at waist height.

Washington Caution Zone Jobs

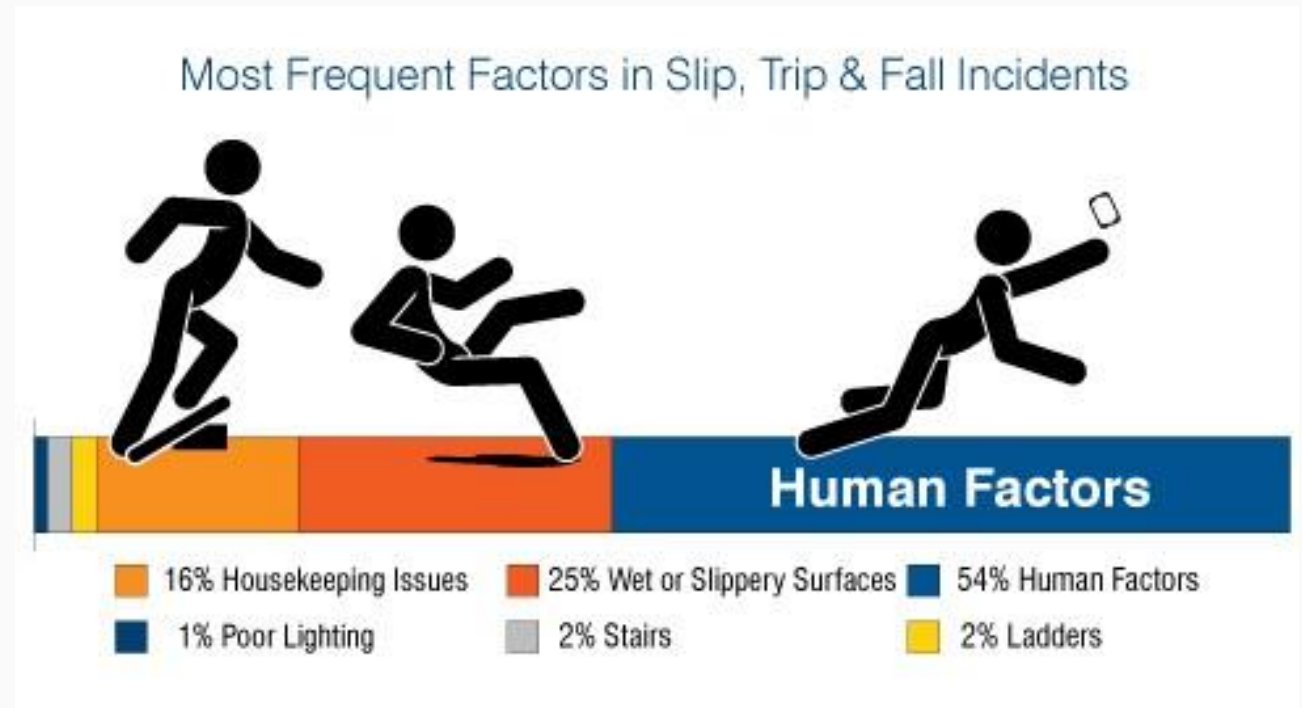
Example	Criteria
	Repeating the same motion with the neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, or hands (excluding keying activities) with little or no variation every few seconds, more than 2 hours total per day.
	Performing intensive keying more than 4 hours total per day.
	Using the hand (heel/base of palm) or knee as a hammer more than 10 times per hour, more than 2 hours total per day.



Slips, Trips, and Falls

- Floor Maintenance and Cleaning Protocols:
 - Implement scheduled cleaning and immediate spill response.
 - Use non-slip mats in high-risk areas.
- Proper Footwear Policies:
 - Require closed-toe, slip-resistant shoes for all staff.
- Clear Walkways and Storage Practices:
 - Keep aisles free of clutter and cords.
 - Use proper shelving and avoid over stacking.
- Weather-Related Hazards:
 - Place mats at entrances and use wet floor signs during rain.
 - Monitor for condensation near refrigeration units.

Slips, Trips, and Falls



Chemical and Product Handling

- Safe Handling of Cannabis Products and Concentrates:
 - Use gloves when handling open product.
 - Avoid skin contact with concentrates or oils.
- Storage of Cleaning Chemicals:
 - Store in labeled, ventilated cabinets away from cannabis products.
 - Never mix chemicals.
- Labeling and Safety Data Sheets (SDS):
 - Maintain an up-to-date SDS binder and train staff on how to read and use it.
- Ventilation for Odor Control and Exposure Mitigation:
 - Ensure HVAC systems are functioning, and filters are changed regularly.
 - Use localized exhaust for strong odors or volatile substances.

Cannabis Fatality Inspection Completion

OSHA defines Cannabis dust as Hazardous Substance

OSHA citations after an employee's fatal asthma attack following workplace exposure to ground cannabis dust (GCD)

- Failing to compile a list of the hazardous chemicals in the facility, including ground cannabis dust (29 CFR 1910.1200(e)(1)(i));
- Failing to obtain or develop a safety data sheet for hazardous chemicals such as ground cannabis dust (29 CFR 1910.1200(g)(1)); and
- Not providing employees effective information and training on hazardous chemicals in their work area (29 CFR 1910.1200(h)(1)).

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Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Shattuck Office Center
138 River Road, Suite 102
Andover, MA 01810
Phone: (978)837-4460 FAX: (978) 837-4455



Citation and Notification of Penalty

This Citation and Notification of Penalty (this Citation) describes violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. The penalty(ies) listed herein is (are) based on these violations. You must abate the violations referred to in this Citation by the dates listed and pay the penalties proposed, unless within 15 working days (excluding weekends and Federal holidays) from your receipt of this Citation and Notification of Penalty you mail a notice of contest to the U.S. Department of Labor Area Office at the address shown above. Please refer to the enclosed booklet (OSHA 3000) which outlines your rights and responsibilities and which should be read in conjunction with this form. Issuance of this Citation does not constitute a finding that a violation of the Act has occurred unless there is a failure to contest as provided for in the Act or, if contested, unless this Citation is affirmed by the Review Commission or a court.

Ventilation Requirements

- General Premises Requirements:
 - Cannabis storage areas must be secure, enclosed, and locked.
 - The premises must be constructed to prevent unauthorized access and protect product integrity, which includes proper environmental controls like ventilation
- Odor Control:
 - Adequate ventilation must be in place to prevent cannabis odors from escaping the premises.
 - This often involves carbon filtration systems or HVAC systems with odor control features.
- Air Quality and Safety:
 - The CBC requires that storage areas comply with mechanical ventilation standards to ensure air quality and fire safety, especially if flammable materials (like alcohol-based cleaning agents) are stored.

Ventilation Requirements

Continued...

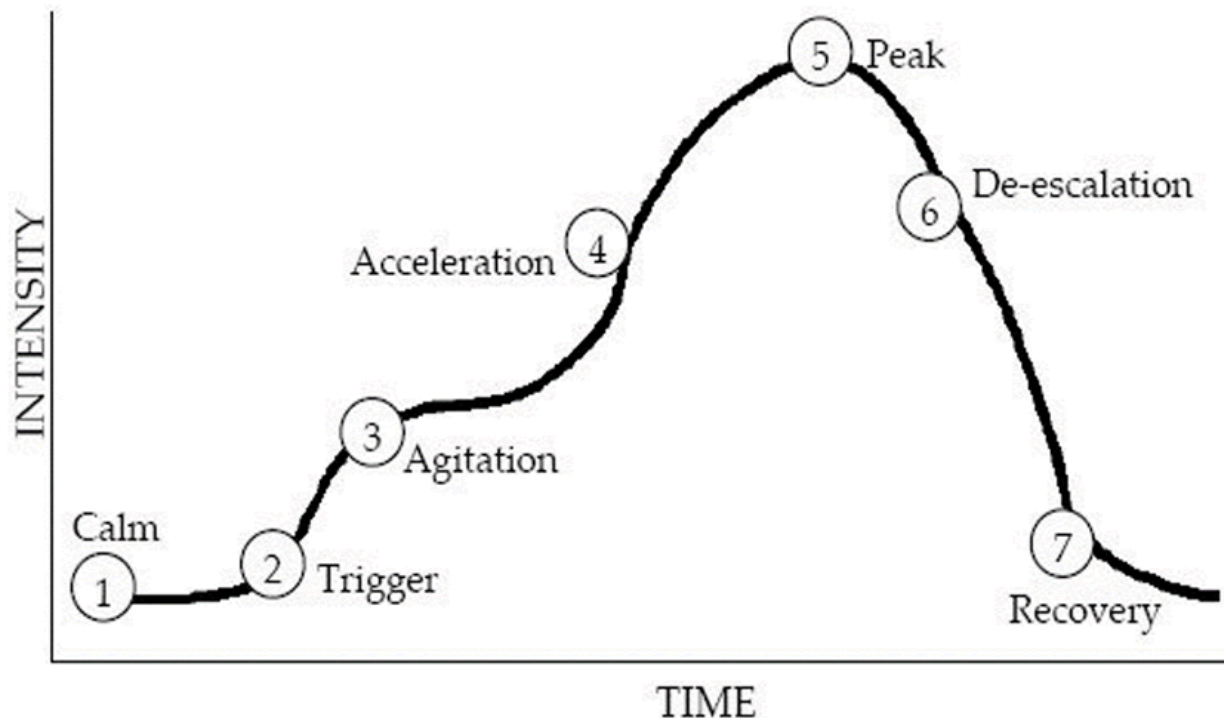
- Humidity and Temperature Control:
 - While not always explicitly stated, maintaining stable humidity and temperature is considered best practice to preserve product quality and prevent mold or degradation.
- Compliance with Local Codes:
 - Local jurisdictions may impose additional ventilation or air filtration requirements, especially in urban or mixed-use areas.
 - Always check with your city or county cannabis permitting office.



Customer & Employee Safety

- De-escalation Training:
 - Teach staff how to recognize agitation, use calm language, and call for backup when needed.
- Harassment Prevention:
 - Enforce a zero-tolerance policy for harassment from customers or coworkers.
 - Provide clear reporting channels.
- Handling Intoxicated or Aggressive Customers:
 - Train staff to refuse service safely and involve security or law enforcement when necessary.
- Crowd Control During High-Traffic Events:
 - Use stanchions, signage, and appointment systems to manage flow.
 - Have extra staff on hand during promotions or product drops.

Crisis Escalation Model



- At each stage there are things that increase and things that decrease escalation
- Employees should understand the crisis model and how to respond to each stage
- Third party organizations have formal processes like Crisis Prevention Institute, PART and MANDT.

Fire Safety & Emergency Preparedness

Fire Safety

- Fire Extinguisher Training:
 - Ensure extinguishers are accessible and staff know how to use them (PASS method).
- Fire Prevention Plan
 - Written Plan required over 10 employees.
 - ID major fire hazards, proper handling and storage, potential ignition source and the specific fire protection equipment needed.
 - Responsibilities and training.

Emergency Preparedness

- Natural Disasters
- Evacuation Plan & Drills
 - Post clear exit maps and conduct regular drills.
 - Assign roles like fire wardens or sweepers.
- Critical Operations Shut Down
 - What operations must be shut down.
 - Responsible party.

Fire Hazards in Retail Cannabis Operations

Flammable Liquids and Aerosols

- Cannabis tinctures, cleaning agents, and some infused products may contain alcohol or other flammable solvents.
- Aerosolized products (e.g., sprays, lubricants) can be ignition sources if not stored properly.

Electrical Hazards

- Overloaded circuits from lighting, HVAC, security systems, and point-of-sale equipment.
- Improper use of extension cords or damaged wiring.

Improper Storage of Combustibles

- Cardboard boxes, paper packaging, and plastic containers stored near heat sources.
- Overstocked storage rooms with poor ventilation.

Odor Control and HVAC Systems

- Some odor mitigation systems use ozone generators or other equipment that can overheat or spark if not maintained.

Battery-Powered Devices

- Vape pens, lithium-ion batteries, and chargers can overheat or catch fire if damaged or improperly stored.

Employee Smoking or Vaping

- Despite being a cannabis business, smoking or vaping indoors is prohibited and poses a fire risk.

Improper Disposal of Flammable Waste

- Rags soaked in alcohol or cleaning agents not disposed of in fire-safe containers.

Holiday or Decorative Lighting

- Temporary lighting displays can overload circuits or use non-commercial grade equipment.

Regulatory Compliance & Training

OSHA Standards

- Follow general industry standards for hazard communication, PPE, and recordkeeping.

State Cannabis Regulations

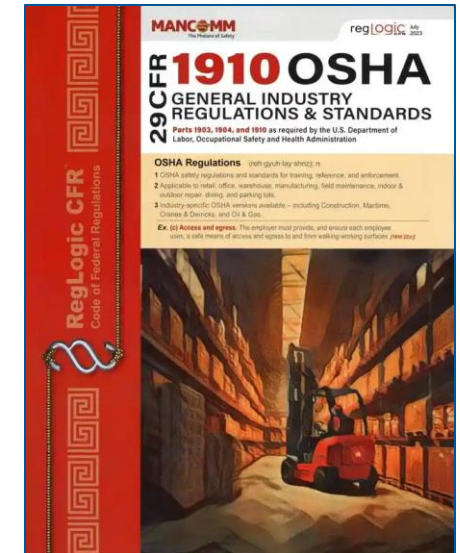
- Comply with local rules on product handling, security, and employee conduct.

Employee Safety Training and Documentation

- Maintain training logs, incident reports, and safety meeting minutes.

Incident Reporting and Investigation

- Encourage prompt reporting of near misses and injuries.
- Investigate root causes and implement corrective actions.

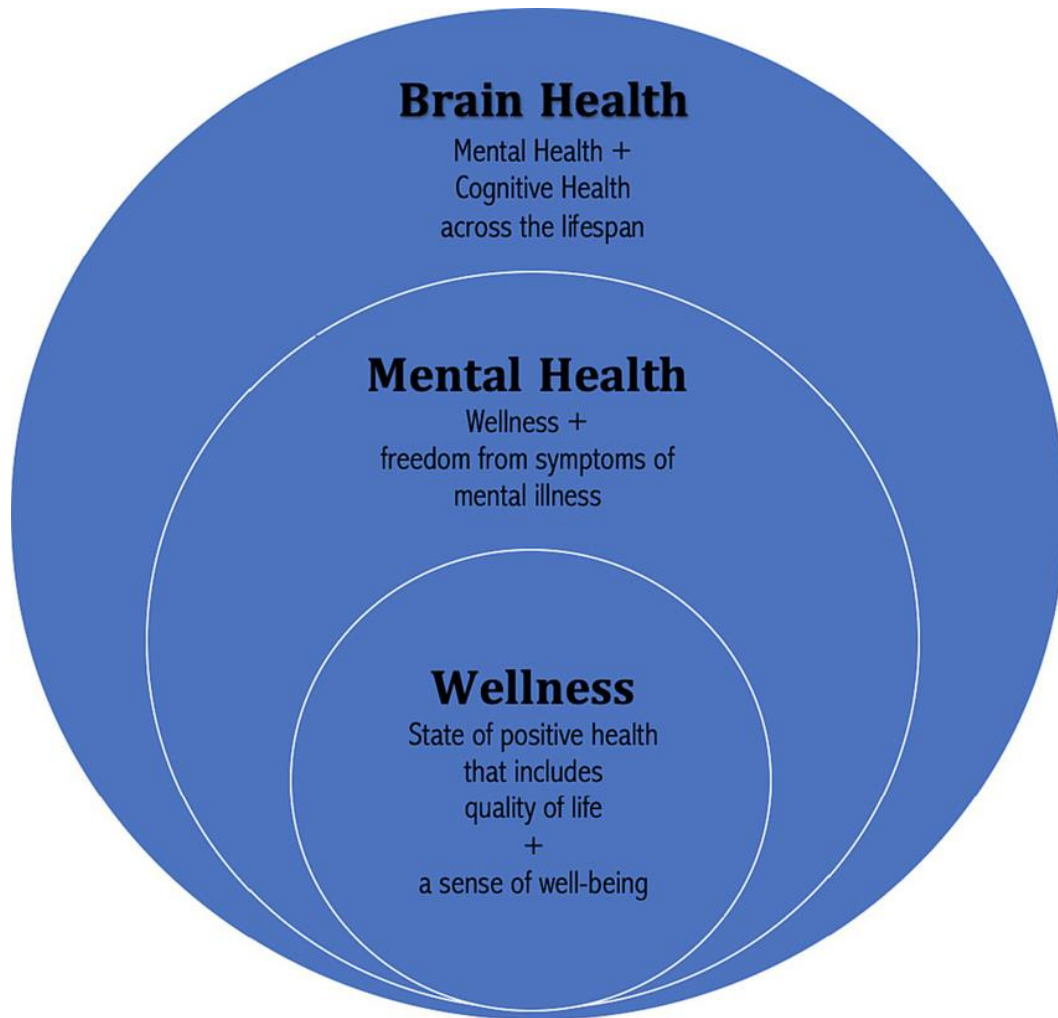


California Required Safety Training

- Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)
- Hazard Communication (HazCom)
- Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
- Fire Prevention Training
- Workplace Violence Prevention (effective July 1, 2024)
- Heat Illness Prevention
- COVID-19/Infectious Disease Prevention (if applicable)
- Cal/OSHA 30-Hour General Industry Training - (Required for one supervisor and one employee per licensed business under AB 2799)



Mental Health & Wellness



Stress Management Resources

- Offer access to EAPs, mental health days, or wellness stipends.

Workplace Violence Prevention

- Train staff to recognize warning signs and report concerns. Have a clear response plan.

Support for High-Stress Roles

- Rotate duties, provide regular breaks, and foster a supportive team culture.

Control Hierarchy

Effective Controls Make a Difference

- Training rarely makes a significant impact unless training about a change in status quo
- PPE is very dependent on employee adherence
- Engineering controls are much more positive to control loss
- Substitution and Elimination of the hazard are the most effective controls

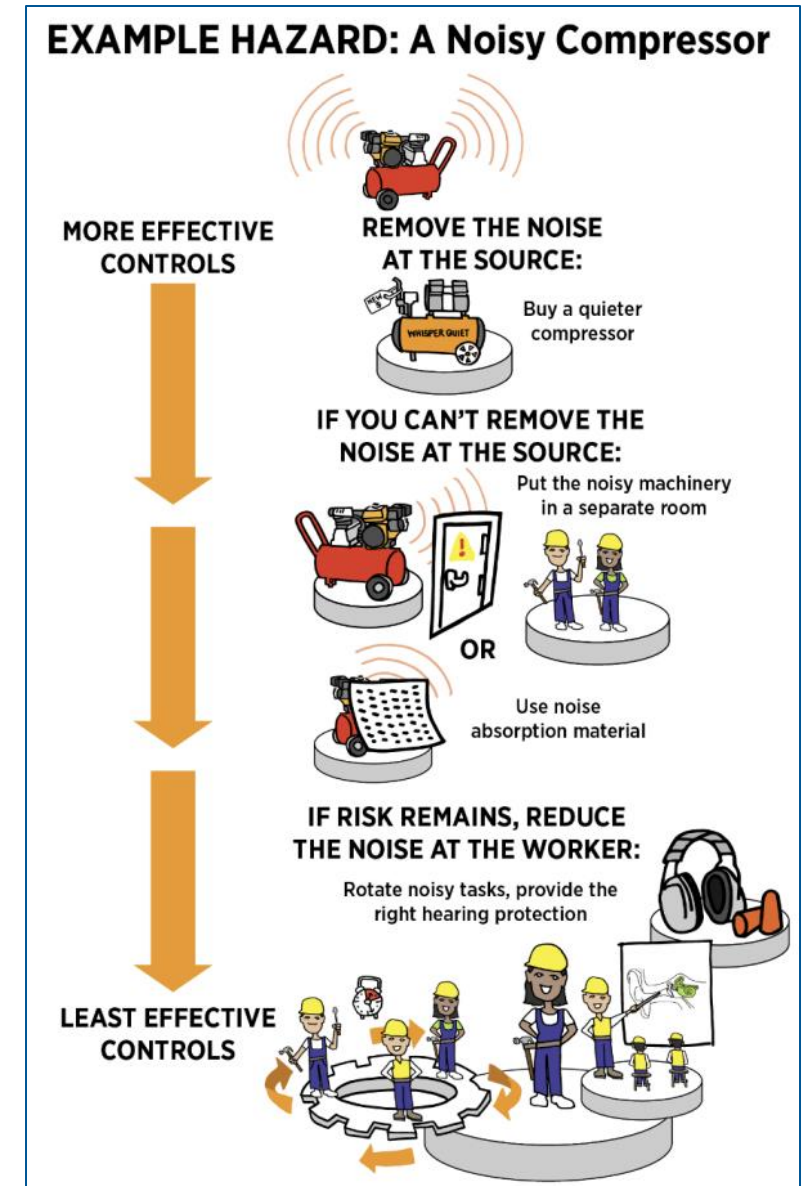


Image from: OSHA IDENTIFYING HAZARD CONTROL OPTIONS: The Hierarchy of Control

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Questions?