

Article XVIII, Section 16. Personal use and regulation of marijuana.

(1) Purpose and findings.

(a) In the interest of the efficient use of law enforcement resources, enhancing revenue for public purposes, and individual freedom, the people of the state of Colorado find and declare that the use of marijuana should be legal for persons twenty-one years of age or older and taxed in a manner similar to alcohol.

(b) In the interest of the health and public safety of our citizenry, the people of the state of Colorado further find and declare that marijuana should be regulated in a manner similar to alcohol so that:

(I) Individuals will have to show proof of age before purchasing marijuana;

(II) Selling, distributing, or transferring marijuana to minors and other individuals under the age of twenty-one shall remain illegal;

(III) Driving under the influence of marijuana shall remain illegal;

(IV) Legitimate, taxpaying business people, and not criminal actors, will conduct sales of marijuana; and

(V) Marijuana sold in this state will be labeled and subject to additional regulations to ensure that consumers are informed and protected.

(c) In the interest of enacting rational policies for the treatment of all variations of the cannabis plant, the people of Colorado further find and declare that industrial hemp

should be regulated separately from strains of cannabis with higher delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) concentrations.

(d) The people of the state of Colorado further find and declare that it is necessary to ensure consistency and fairness in the application of this section throughout the state and that, therefore, the matters addressed by this section are, except as specified herein, matters of statewide concern.

(2) Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires,

(a) "Colorado Medical Marijuana Code" means article 43.3 of title 12, Colorado Revised Statutes.

(b) "Consumer" means a person twenty-one years of age or older who purchases marijuana or marijuana products for personal use by persons twenty-one years of age or older, but not for resale to others.

(c) "Department" means the department of revenue or its successor agency.

(d) "Industrial hemp" has the same meaning as it is defined in federal law or as the term is defined in Colorado statute.

(e) "Locality" means a county, municipality, or city and county.

(f) "Marijuana" or "marihuana" means all parts of the plant of the genus cannabis whether growing or not, the seeds thereof, the resin extracted from any part of the plant, and every compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of the plant, its seeds, or its resin, including marihuana concentrate. "Marijuana" or "marihuana" does not include industrial hemp, nor does it include fiber produced from the stalks, oil, or cake made from the seeds of the plant, sterilized seed of the plant which is incapable of germination, or the weight of any other ingredient combined with marijuana to prepare topical or oral administrations, food, drink, or other product.

(g) "Marijuana accessories" means any equipment, products, or materials of any kind which are used, intended for use, or designed for use in planting, propagating, cultivating, growing, harvesting, composting, manufacturing, compounding, converting, producing, processing, preparing, testing, analyzing, packaging, repackaging, storing, vaporizing, or containing marijuana, or for ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing marijuana into the human body.

(h) "Marijuana cultivation facility" means an entity licensed to cultivate, prepare, and package marijuana and sell marijuana to retail marijuana stores, to marijuana product manufacturing facilities, and to other marijuana cultivation facilities, but not to consumers.

(i) "Marijuana establishment" means a marijuana cultivation facility, a marijuana testing facility, a marijuana product manufacturing facility, or a retail marijuana store.

(j) "Marijuana product manufacturing facility" means an entity licensed to purchase marijuana; manufacture, prepare, and package marijuana products; and sell marijuana and marijuana products to other marijuana product manufacturing facilities and to retail marijuana stores, but not to consumers.

(k) "Marijuana products" means concentrated marijuana products and marijuana products that are comprised of marijuana and other ingredients and are intended for use or consumption, such as, but not limited to, edible products, ointments, and tinctures.

(l) "Marijuana testing facility" means an entity licensed to analyze and certify the safety and potency of marijuana.

(m) "Medical marijuana center" means an entity licensed by a state agency to sell marijuana and marijuana products pursuant to section 14 of this article and the Colorado Medical Marijuana Code.

(n) "Retail marijuana store" means an entity licensed to purchase marijuana from marijuana cultivation facilities and marijuana and marijuana products from marijuana product manufacturing facilities and to sell marijuana and marijuana products to consumers.

(o) "Unreasonably impracticable" means that the measures necessary to comply with the regulations require such a high investment of risk, money, time, or any other resource or asset that the operation of a marijuana establishment is not worthy of being carried out in practice by a reasonably prudent businessperson.

(3) Personal use of marijuana. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the following acts are not unlawful and shall not be an offense under Colorado law or the law of any locality within Colorado or be a basis for seizure or forfeiture of assets under Colorado law for persons twenty-one years of age or older:

(a) Possessing, using, displaying, purchasing, or transporting marijuana accessories or one ounce or less of marijuana.

(b) Possessing, growing, processing, or transporting no more than six marijuana plants, with three or fewer being mature, flowering plants, and possession of the marijuana produced by the plants on the premises where the plants were grown, provided that the growing takes place in an enclosed, locked space, is not conducted openly or publicly, and is not made available for sale.

(c) Transfer of one ounce or less of marijuana without remuneration to a person who is twenty-one years of age or older.

(d) Consumption of marijuana, provided that nothing in this section shall permit consumption that is conducted openly and publicly or in a manner that endangers others.

(e) Assisting another person who is twenty-one years of age or older in any of the acts described in paragraphs (a) through (d) of this subsection.

(4) Lawful operation of marijuana-related facilities.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the following acts are not unlawful and shall not be an offense under Colorado law or be a basis for seizure or forfeiture of assets under Colorado law for persons twenty-one years of age or older:

(a) Manufacture, possession, or purchase of marijuana accessories or the sale of marijuana accessories to a person who is twenty-one years of age or older.

(b) Possessing, displaying, or transporting marijuana or marijuana products; purchase of marijuana from a marijuana cultivation facility; purchase of marijuana or marijuana products from a marijuana product manufacturing facility; or sale of marijuana or marijuana products to consumers, if the person conducting the activities described in this paragraph has obtained a current, valid license to operate a retail marijuana store or is acting in his or her capacity as an owner, employee or agent of a licensed retail marijuana store.

(c) Cultivating, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, displaying, or possessing marijuana; delivery or transfer of marijuana to a marijuana testing facility; selling marijuana to a marijuana cultivation facility, a marijuana product manufacturing facility, or a retail marijuana store; or the purchase of marijuana from a marijuana cultivation facility, if the person conducting the activities described in this paragraph has obtained a current, valid license to operate a marijuana cultivation facility or is acting in his or her capacity as an owner, employee, or agent of a licensed marijuana cultivation facility.

(d) Packaging, processing, transporting, manufacturing, displaying, or possessing marijuana or marijuana products; delivery or transfer of marijuana or marijuana products to a marijuana testing facility; selling marijuana or marijuana products to a retail marijuana store or a marijuana product manufacturing facility; the purchase of marijuana from a marijuana cultivation facility; or the purchase of marijuana or marijuana products from a marijuana product manufacturing facility, if the person conducting the activities described in this paragraph has obtained a current, valid license to operate a marijuana product manufacturing facility or is acting in his or her capacity as an owner, employee, or agent of a licensed marijuana product manufacturing facility.

(e) Possessing, cultivating, processing, repackaging, storing, transporting, displaying, transferring or delivering marijuana or marijuana products if the person has obtained a current, valid license to operate a marijuana testing facility or is acting in his or her capacity as an owner, employee, or agent of a licensed marijuana testing facility.

(f) Leasing or otherwise allowing the use of property owned, occupied or controlled by any person, corporation or other entity for any of the activities conducted lawfully in accordance with paragraphs (a) through (e) of this subsection.

(5) Regulation of marijuana.

(a) Not later than July 1, 2013, the department shall adopt regulations necessary for implementation of this section. Such regulations shall not prohibit the operation of marijuana establishments, either expressly or through regulations that make their operation unreasonably impracticable. Such regulations shall include:

(I) Procedures for the issuance, renewal, suspension, and revocation of a license to operate a marijuana establishment, with such procedures subject to all requirements of article 4 of title 24 of the Colorado Administrative Procedure Act or any successor provision;

(II) A schedule of application, licensing and renewal fees, provided, application fees shall not exceed five thousand dollars, with this upper limit adjusted annually for inflation, unless the department determines a greater

fee is necessary to carry out its responsibilities under this section, and provided further, an entity that is licensed under the Colorado Medical Marijuana Code to cultivate or sell marijuana or to manufacture marijuana products at the time this section takes effect and that chooses to apply for a separate marijuana establishment license shall not be required to pay an application fee greater than five hundred dollars to apply for a license to operate a marijuana establishment in accordance with the provisions of this section;

(III) Qualifications for licensure that are directly and demonstrably related to the operation of a marijuana establishment;

(IV) Security requirements for marijuana establishments;

(V) Requirements to prevent the sale or diversion of marijuana and marijuana products to persons under the age of twenty-one;

(VI) Labeling requirements for marijuana and marijuana products sold or distributed by a marijuana establishment;

(VII) Health and safety regulations and standards for the manufacture of marijuana products and the cultivation of marijuana;

(VIII) Restrictions on the advertising and display of marijuana and marijuana products; and

(IX) Civil penalties for the failure to comply with regulations made pursuant to this section.

(b) In order to ensure the most secure, reliable, and accountable system for the production and distribution of marijuana and marijuana products in accordance with this subsection, in any competitive application process the department shall have as a primary consideration whether an applicant:

(I) Has prior experience producing or distributing marijuana or marijuana products pursuant to section 14 of this article and the Colorado Medical Marijuana Code in the locality in which the applicant seeks to operate a marijuana establishment; and

(II) Has, during the experience described in subparagraph (I), complied consistently with section 14 of this article, the provisions of the Colorado Medical Marijuana Code and conforming regulations.

(c) In order to ensure that individual privacy is protected, notwithstanding paragraph (a), the department shall not require a consumer to provide a retail marijuana store with personal information other than government-issued identification to determine the consumer's age, and a retail marijuana store shall not be required to acquire and record personal information about consumers other than information typically acquired in a financial transaction conducted at a retail liquor store.

(d) The general assembly shall enact an excise tax to be levied upon marijuana sold or otherwise transferred by a marijuana cultivation facility to a marijuana product manufacturing facility or to a retail marijuana store at a rate not to exceed fifteen percent prior to January 1, 2017 and at a rate to be determined by the general assembly thereafter, and shall direct the department to establish procedures for the collection of all taxes levied. Provided, the first forty million dollars in revenue raised annually from any such excise tax shall be credited to the Public School Capital Construction Assistance Fund created by article 43.7 of title 22, C.R.S., or any successor fund dedicated to a similar purpose. Provided further, no such excise tax shall be levied upon marijuana intended for sale at medical marijuana centers pursuant to section 14 of this article and the Colorado Medical Marijuana Code.

(e) Not later than October 1, 2013, each locality shall enact an ordinance or regulation specifying the entity within the locality that is responsible for processing applications submitted for a license to operate a marijuana

establishment within the boundaries of the locality and for the issuance of such licenses should the issuance by the locality become necessary because of a failure by the department to adopt regulations pursuant to paragraph (a) or because of a failure by the department to process and issue licenses as required by paragraph (g).

(f) A locality may enact ordinances or regulations, not in conflict with this section or with regulations or legislation enacted pursuant to this section, governing the time, place, manner and number of marijuana establishment operations; establishing procedures for the issuance, suspension, and revocation of a license issued by the locality in accordance with paragraph (h) or (i), such procedures to be subject to all requirements of article 4 of title 24 of the Colorado Administrative Procedure Act or any successor provision; establishing a schedule of annual operating, licensing, and application fees for marijuana establishments, provided, the application fee shall only be due if an application is submitted to a locality in accordance with paragraph (i) and a licensing fee shall only be due if a license is issued by a locality in accordance with paragraph (h) or (i); and establishing civil penalties for violation of an ordinance or regulation governing the time, place, and manner of a marijuana establishment that may operate in such locality. A locality may prohibit the operation of marijuana cultivation facilities, marijuana product manufacturing facilities, marijuana testing facilities, or retail marijuana stores through the enactment of an ordinance or through an initiated or referred measure; provided, any initiated or referred measure to prohibit the operation of marijuana cultivation facilities, marijuana product manufacturing facilities, marijuana testing facilities, or retail marijuana stores must appear on a general election ballot during an even numbered year.

(g) Each application for an annual license to operate a marijuana establishment shall be submitted to the department. The department shall:

(I) Begin accepting and processing applications on October 1, 2013;

(II) Immediately forward a copy of each application and half of the license application fee to the locality in which the applicant desires to operate the marijuana establishment;

(III) Issue an annual license to the applicant between forty- five and ninety days after receipt of an application unless the department finds the applicant is not in compliance with regulations enacted pursuant to paragraph (a) or the department is notified by the relevant locality that the applicant is not in compliance with ordinances and regulations made pursuant to paragraph (f) and in effect at the time of application, provided, where a locality has enacted a numerical limit on the number of marijuana establishments and a greater number of applicants seek licenses, the department shall solicit and consider input from the locality as to the locality's preference or preferences for licensure; and

(IV) Upon denial of an application, notify the applicant in writing of the specific reason for its denial.

(h) If the department does not issue a license to an applicant within ninety days of receipt of the application filed in accordance with paragraph (g) and does not notify the applicant of the specific reason for its denial, in writing and within such time period, or if the department has adopted regulations pursuant to paragraph (a) and has accepted applications pursuant to paragraph (g) but has not issued any licenses by January 1, 2014, the applicant may resubmit its application directly to the locality, pursuant to paragraph (e), and the locality may issue an annual license to the applicant. A locality issuing a license to an applicant shall do so within ninety days of receipt of the resubmitted application unless the locality finds and notifies the applicant that the applicant is not in compliance with ordinances and regulations made pursuant to paragraph (f) in effect at the time the application is resubmitted and the locality shall notify the department if an annual license has been issued to the applicant. If an application is submitted to a locality under this paragraph, the department shall forward to the locality the application fee paid by the applicant to the department upon request by the locality. A license issued by a locality in accordance with this paragraph shall have the same force and effect as a license issued by the

department in accordance with paragraph (g) and the holder of such license shall not be subject to regulation or enforcement by the department during the term of that license. A subsequent or renewed license may be issued under this paragraph on an annual basis only upon resubmission to the locality of a new application submitted to the department pursuant to paragraph (g). Nothing in this paragraph shall limit such relief as may be available to an aggrieved party under section 24-4-104, C.R.S., of the Colorado Administrative Procedure Act or any successor provision.

(i) If the department does not adopt regulations required by paragraph (a), an applicant may submit an application directly to a locality after October 1, 2013 and the locality may issue an annual license to the applicant. A locality issuing a license to an applicant shall do so within ninety days of receipt of the application unless it finds and notifies the applicant that the applicant is not in compliance with ordinances and regulations made pursuant to paragraph (f) in effect at the time of application and shall notify the department if an annual license has been issued to the applicant. A license issued by a locality in accordance with this paragraph shall have the same force and effect as a license issued by the department in accordance with paragraph (g) and the holder of such license shall not be subject to regulation or enforcement by the department during the term of that license. A subsequent or renewed license may be issued under this paragraph on an annual basis if the department has not adopted regulations required by paragraph (a) at least ninety days prior to the date upon which such subsequent or renewed license would be effective or if the department has adopted regulations pursuant to paragraph (a) but has not, at least ninety days after the adoption of such regulations, issued licenses pursuant to paragraph (g).

(j) Not later than July 1, 2014, the general assembly shall enact legislation governing the cultivation, processing and sale of industrial hemp.

(6) Employers, driving, minors and control of property.

(a) Nothing in this section is intended to require an employer to permit or accommodate the use, consumption, possession, transfer, display, transportation, sale or growing of marijuana in the workplace or to affect the ability of employers to have policies restricting the use of marijuana by employees.

(b) Nothing in this section is intended to allow driving under the influence of marijuana or driving while impaired by marijuana or to supersede statutory laws related to driving under the influence of marijuana or driving while impaired by marijuana, nor shall this section prevent the state from enacting and imposing penalties for driving under the influence of or while impaired by marijuana.

(c) Nothing in this section is intended to permit the transfer of marijuana, with or without remuneration, to a person under the age of twenty-one or to allow a person under the age of twenty-one to purchase, possess, use, transport, grow, or consume marijuana.

(d) Nothing in this section shall prohibit a person, employer, school, hospital, detention facility, corporation or any other entity who occupies, owns or controls a property from prohibiting or otherwise regulating the possession, consumption, use, display, transfer, distribution, sale, transportation, or growing of marijuana on or in that property.

(7) Medical marijuana provisions unaffected.

Nothing in this section shall be construed:

(a) To limit any privileges or rights of a medical marijuana patient, primary caregiver, or licensed entity as provided in section 14 of this article and the Colorado Medical Marijuana Code;

(b) To permit a medical marijuana center to distribute marijuana to a person who is not a medical marijuana patient;

(c) To permit a medical marijuana center to purchase marijuana or marijuana products in a manner or from a source not authorized under the Colorado Medical Marijuana Code;

(d) To permit any medical marijuana center licensed pursuant to section 14 of this article and the Colorado Medical Marijuana Code to operate on the same premises as a retail marijuana store; or

(e) To discharge the department, the Colorado Board of Health, or the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment from their statutory and constitutional duties to regulate medical marijuana pursuant to section 14 of this article and the Colorado Medical Marijuana Code.

(8) Self-executing, severability, conflicting provisions. All provisions of this section are self- executing except as specified herein, are severable, and, except where otherwise indicated in the text, shall supersede conflicting state statutory, local charter, ordinance, or resolution, and other state and local provisions.

(9) Effective date. Unless otherwise provided by this section, all provisions of this section shall become effective upon official declaration of the vote hereon by proclamation of the governor, pursuant to section 1(4) of article V.

Source: Initiated 2012: Entire section added, effective upon proclamation of the Governor, **L. 2013**, p. 3291, December 10, 2012. **Referred 2018:** (2)(d) amended, Amendment X, L. 2018, p. 3081, effective upon proclamation of the Governor, December 19, 2018. See L. 2019, p. 4541.

Editor's note: (1) In subsection (4)(c), changed "vaild" to "valid"; in subsection (4)(f), changed "activites" to "activities"; and, in subsection (5)(b)(II), changed "consistantly" to "consistently" to correct the misspellings in the 2012 initiative (Amendment 64).

(2) In (5)(a)(II), reference to "at the time this section takes effect" refers to the proclamation date of the governor, December 10, 2012. In subsection (9), reference to "shall become effective upon official proclamation of the vote hereon by proclamation of the governor" is December 10, 2012.