

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act Relating to Industrial Hemp

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 7 MRSA c. 406-A is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 406-A

HEMP

§ 2231. Industrial hemp

1. Definition. As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, "industrial hemp" means any variety of Cannabis sativa L. with a delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol concentration that does not exceed 0.3% on a dry weight basis and that is grown or possessed by a licensed grower in compliance with this chapter.

2. Growing permitted. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person may plant, grow, harvest, possess, process, sell and buy industrial hemp if that person holds a license issued pursuant to subsection 4.

3. Application. A person desiring to grow industrial hemp for commercial purposes shall apply to the commissioner for a license on a form prescribed by the commissioner. The application must include the name and address of the applicant, the legal description of the land area to be used for the production of industrial hemp and a map, an aerial photograph or global positioning coordinates sufficient for locating the production fields. Except for employees of the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station and the University of Maine System involved in research and related activities, an applicant for an initial licensure must submit a set of the applicant's fingerprints, taken by a law enforcement officer, and any other information necessary to complete a statewide and nationwide criminal history record check by the Department of Public Safety, State Bureau of Identification and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. All costs associated with the criminal history record check are the responsibility of the applicant and must be submitted with the fingerprints. Criminal history records provided to the commissioner under this section are confidential. The results of criminal records checks received under this subsection may only be used in determining an applicant's eligibility for licensure. A person with a prior criminal conviction is not eligible for licensure.

4. License issued. Upon review and approval of an application, the commissioner shall notify the applicant and request that the application fee determined under subsection 7 be submitted. Upon receipt of the appropriate fee and in accordance with subsection 8, the commissioner shall issue a license, which is valid for a period of one year and only for the site or sites specified in the license.

5. Documentation. A licensee shall file with the commissioner documentation indicating that the seeds planted were of a type and variety of hemp approved by the commissioner as having a concentration of no more than 0.3% delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol by dry weight and a copy of any contract to grow industrial hemp. A licensee shall notify the commissioner of the sale or distribution of industrial hemp grown by the licensee and the name of each person to whom the industrial hemp was sold or distributed.

6. Rules. The commissioner shall adopt rules to establish approved varieties of industrial hemp, protocols for testing plant parts during growth for delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol levels and guidelines for monitoring the growth and harvest of industrial hemp. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are major substantive rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

7. Fees. The commissioner shall establish through rulemaking under subsection 6 an application fee, a license fee and per acre fees for monitoring, sampling and testing that are reasonable and necessary to cover the costs of the department.

All fees received pursuant to this subsection must be paid to the Treasurer of State and credited to a separate, nonlapsing account in the department. Money received pursuant to this subsection must be used for the expenses of administering this chapter.

8. Licensing contingent upon action by Federal Government. A license may not be issued under this section unless:

A. The United States Congress excludes industrial hemp from the definition of "marihuana" for the purpose of the Controlled Substances Act, 21 United States Code, Section 802(16); or

B. The United States Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration takes affirmative steps towards issuing a permit under 21 United States Code, Chapter 13, Subchapter 1, Part C to a person holding a license issued by a state to grow industrial hemp.

The commissioner shall notify the Revisor of Statutes and the Commissioner of Public Safety when the requirements of either paragraph A or B have been met.

Effective September 12, 2009