

Regulation of Industrial Hemp in Ventura County

The cultivation of Industrial Hemp in California is regulated by state law (Food and Agricultural Code, Sections [81000 to 81015](#)) and regulations (CA Code of Regulations, Sections [4900 to 4950](#)). In December of 2020, Ventura County adopted the “Ventura County Hemp Regulations,” Sections [9600 to 9631](#) of the Ventura County Ordinance Code.

Ventura County Hemp Regulations

Ventura County Ordinance Code

Division 9. – Agriculture

Chapter 6. - Cultivation of Industrial Hemp

9600 - Title.

The provisions of this Chapter shall be known as the hemp regulations or the Ventura County Hemp regulations.

9601 - Findings and purpose.

Pursuant to the California Constitution, article 11, section 7, and section 65850 of the Government Code, in order to protect public health, safety and welfare, the Board of Supervisors adopts the hemp regulations to mitigate objectionable odors and other adverse effects of hemp cultivation and related activities. All hemp cultivation and related activities in the unincorporated area shall be conducted in accordance with State law, including the requirement to register pursuant to division 24 of the Food and Agricultural Code, in addition to the hemp regulations.

9602 - Definitions.

For the purpose of this Chapter, the following definitions shall apply. Terms not defined in this Section shall have the same meanings as in Food and Agricultural Code, division 24, section 81000 et seq.

- a. "Commissioner" means the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner.
- b. "List of low odor varieties" means the list of hemp varieties found to be low in odor established pursuant to Section 9615 of this Chapter.
- c. "Greenhouse" means a permanent structure existing on December 15, [2020](#), including glasshouses, conservatories, hothouses, or other similar structures for the covered propagation and growing of plants, constructed with a translucent roof and/or walls.
- d. "Hemp" has the same meaning as "industrial hemp" or "hemp" as defined by Food and Agricultural Code section 81000, as that definition may be amended.
- e. "Sensitive site" means a property with a certificate of occupancy that is any of the following:

- (1) Within a residential zone within a city;
- (2) Within an unincorporated area designated "Urban," "Existing Community" or "Existing Community-Urban Reserve" in the Ventura County General Plan;
- (3) An elementary or high school;
- (4) A licensed daycare center that was licensed on or before the effective date of the current registration;
- (5) A college or university building, except for a stadium; or
- (6) A hospital or medical facility.

f. For the purposes of these regulations, "Tierra Rejada Valley" is defined as the area within the boundary of a line beginning at the intersection of Moorpark Road and Read Road Eastward 1.4 miles along Read Road, continuing past the intersection with Calleguas Lane to the end, and from there along an imaginary line due East to the intersection of the southbound side of U.S. Highway 23, and from there Northwest along U.S. Highway 23 to the junction of Tierra Rejada Road, and from there westward along Tierra Rejada Road to the intersection of Moorpark Road, and from there southwest along Moorpark Road to the intersection with Read Road.

9610 - Odor mitigation.

a. No hemp shall be grown within one thousand two hundred (1,200) feet of any sensitive site. Except as exempted below in subdivision b of this Section, no flowering hemp shall be grown within either of the following areas:

- (1) One-quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) mile of any sensitive site, except that when a sensitive site is established after a grower registers with the Commissioner, that grower shall not be prohibited from cultivating flowering hemp at the site for the remainder of the grower's registration period, or
- (2) The Tierra Rejada Valley, due to its unique geographical and meteorological features.

b. The following are exempt from the restriction in subdivision a of this Section:

- (1) Any planting of flowering hemp consisting of five (5) acres or less grown by an established agricultural research institution registered with the Commissioner and at least one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) mile from any other exempt planting.
- (2) Any planting from seed on the List of Low Odor Varieties or that was on the List of Low Odor Varieties at the time it was planted.

(3) Any planting of hemp within a greenhouse that pre-dates December 15, [2020](#), and is located at least one thousand two hundred (1,200) feet from any sensitive site, and equipped with and uses the best available odor mitigation system, and equipped with and uses blackout shading that limits artificial lighting from reaching neighboring properties between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

(4) Any planting of flowering hemp where the owner or operator of each sensitive site within one-quarter (¼) mile has consented, in writing, to the hemp cultivation. Such consent is valid only during the period of the registration in which it is given and expires when that registration expires.

c. Any flowering hemp planted within one (1) mile of a sensitive site, except for a variety on the List of Low Odor Varieties, must be harvested within thirty (30) days of issuance of the first laboratory test report indicating "PASSED AS CALIFORNIA INDUSTRIAL HEMP" pursuant to Food and Agricultural Code section 81006. Within fifteen (15) days of the completion of harvest, the harvested hemp and remaining hemp debris must be tilled under or moved beyond one (1) mile from any sensitive site.

d. If adverse weather or other unforeseen natural elements during the 30- and 15-day periods described in subdivision c. of this Section necessitate cessation of work harvesting the hemp or tilling under or removing hemp debris, the Commissioner may grant a variance extending the required time to harvest the hemp or remove or till under the hemp debris. The variance shall grant no more than one (1) additional day to harvest or till under or remove hemp debris for each day or portion of a day the Commissioner finds adverse weather or other unforeseen natural elements necessitated cessation of the work.

9615 - List of low odor varieties.

a. The Commissioner shall maintain a list of varieties of hemp that the Commissioner or an entity acceptable to the Commissioner has found to be low in odor.

b. A variety of hemp is considered low in odor if it is not reasonably foreseeable that allowing it to be planted within the quarter-mile zone established in Section 9610, subdivision a.1 of this Chapter or the Tierra Rejada Valley will result in objectionable odors affecting a significant number of people.

c. At least thirty (30) days before adding or removing a variety from the List of Low Odor Varieties, the Commissioner shall give notice of the Commissioner's intent to add or remove a variety from the List of Low Odor Varieties, the reasons for that proposed action, and the opportunity for any interested person to submit comments and information to the Commissioner. Notice required by this subdivision may be given by posting on the Commissioner's website and e-mailing to each person who has filed a request with the Commissioner to receive such notice.

d. If and when the Commissioner adds or removes a variety from the List of Low Odor Varieties, the Commissioner shall issue a written decision with statement of reasons for that action, which shall be posted on the Commissioner's website and e-mailed to each person that has requested notice pursuant to subdivision c of this Section.

e. If the Commissioner removes a variety from the List of Low Odor Varieties, any cultivation of the removed variety may continue until such variety which has been planted is harvested.

9620 - Pollen control.

Male hemp plants may only be grown by a registered seed breeder. Male hemp plants may only be grown in an enclosed greenhouse unless they are more than three (3) miles from any registered hemp site or the registrant obtains written permission from all registrants of any registered hemp site within three (3) miles of the proposed planting and submits a copy to the Commissioner.

9621 - Signs required.

a. Any site used for the cultivation of industrial hemp shall have onsite signs indicating that "Industrial Hemp" is being cultivated. Any signage required under this Section shall be exempt from the signage requirements and restrictions of Article 10 of the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance or Section 8175-5.13 of the Coastal Zoning Ordinance, as applicable. The signs shall:

- (1) State "Industrial Hemp";
- (2) State "NO TRESPASSING" in English and Spanish;
- (3) Measure at least three (3) feet wide by three (3) feet high, with letters and symbols not less than three (3) inches in height that sharply contrast with their immediate background;
- (4) Except for locations affecting a traffic sight triangle where there are no traffic controls on either street at an intersection, be posted at the corners of the site and at all usual points of entry to the site; and
- (5) When a site is adjacent to a public right-of-way be posted at intervals of not more than one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of a mile along the border.

b. Signs may also include information such as: an owner applied number; "Not Marijuana"; "No THC"; "Less than 0.3% THC"; or "No Effects if Smoked."

9622 - Transportation of hemp.

Any person transporting hemp in a vehicle shall have in his or her possession a copy of the certificate of registration.

9623 - Site security.

Each registrant shall submit a site security plan to the Commissioner for the Commissioner's approval and shall comply with such approved plan. The site security plan may include measures such as owner applied numbers, fencing, locking gates when no employees are present, security personnel on site or other security measures.

9624 - Ancillary activities.

Activities ancillary to hemp cultivation, including, but not limited to, drying, curing, trimming and storage, shall be allowed wherever hemp cultivation is allowed; provided that any outdoor ancillary activities that occur within one (1) mile of a sensitive site must be completed within forty-five (45) days of issuance of the first laboratory test report indicating "PASSED AS CALIFORNIA INDUSTRIAL HEMP" pursuant to Food and Agricultural Code section 81006.

9630 - Fees.

The Commissioner shall impose fees on industrial hemp and seed growers for all costs of administering and enforcing division 24 of the Food and Agricultural Code that are not reimbursed by the State and all additional costs of administering and enforcing these hemp regulations. A schedule of such fees shall be adopted by resolution of the County Board of Supervisors.

9631 - Nuisance, abatement and penalties.

a. It shall be unlawful for any person to violate any provision, or to fail to comply with any of the requirements, of the hemp regulations. Any violation of the hemp regulations is enforceable pursuant to Ventura County Ordinance Code Section 13 or as otherwise provided by County ordinance or State law. The specific remedies provided in this Section are cumulative and in addition to any other remedies available at law or in equity.

b. Any hemp cultivated in violation of the hemp regulations is a public nuisance, and the Commissioner may abate or order the violator to abate it. The Commissioner may enter property and structures where hemp may be grown to inspect for compliance with the hemp regulations and abate such nuisances.

c. Odor from a registered hemp cultivation site is not a nuisance if the hemp cultivation site is operated in accordance with the hemp regulations and State industrial hemp laws.

d. Any person or entity that violates any provision of this Chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor.