

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FIRE/PLANNING/BUILDING DEPARTMENT

CANNABIS LICENSING

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE GUIDELINE

Interpretation No: AG-SC-01 (Cannabis Harvest Storage within Non-Habitable Shipping Containers)

Effective Date: 09/03/2019

Originally Issued:

Question

Are shipping containers permissible as non-habitable structures for harvested cannabis storage operations and what occupancy group can be assigned to them?

Applicable Ordinance Section(s)

12.10.315(A)

13.10.650

INTERPRETATION

A shipping container may be permissible as a non-habitable structure for cannabis harvest storage operations and they are to be categorized as a group U occupancy. At a minimum the shipping container shall be equipped with at least one egress door compatible with NFPA requirements. Similar to SCCC Section 12.10.315 (A) (11) these structures shall have no significant electrical, plumbing or mechanical equipment and must be located within the Commercial Agricultural zone and within a 10 minute response time from a Fire Department Fire Station

A maximum of four (4) shipping containers per parcel with a total maximum of 1300 square feet of floor area can be allowed.

The shipping container or the group of shipping containers must be located to have a clear and unobstructed side yards of at least sixty (60) feet in all directions.

Reason

Current California Department of Food and Agriculture regulations for commercial cannabis cultivation operations include requirements for a secure area to be used for the storage of harvested cannabis, all data is entered into the track and trace system as measured by a weighmaster or deputy weighmaster. The weights are measured by an approved scale certified by the County Agricultural Commissioner.

“No significant electrical” shall be defined as a single 15-amp branch with a single duplex ground fault circuit interrupter receptacle outlet for the site (not per shipping container). Any electrical work associated with a shipping container for this purpose must be permitted.

A 10 minute response time from a Fire Department Fire Station can only be verified by a Fire Department official and the verification must be in writing (electronic or paper based). For reference

the Planning Department may consult publicly available web-based programs to assess if the 10 minute response time may be applicable.

A shipping container or multiple containers will satisfy the state requirement for providing a storage area for harvested cannabis. These containers have minimal impacts to native soil as they do not require a permanent foundation and they are not required to comply with the rainwater collections systems defined in the Best Management and Operational Practices Requirements. The single 15-amp branch line is intended to allow for the use of a computer, printer and a sealed scale within the shipping container. The scale is required for measuring weights, the computer is required for inputting data into the State "track and trace" system and the printer can be utilized to print labels that are required by the State for bulk cannabis packages.

Shipping containers may be used for storage, weighing and tracking only. Shipping containers will not be used for trimming, processing, manufacturing, growing, or any other Cannabis-related activity other than storage.

If the Fire or Building Code changes in such a way as to alter this interpretation, then it will be reevaluated in the future.

Definition of Shipping Container: Typically, steel sided eight (8) feet wide and twenty (20) to forty (40) feet in length, made entirely of noncombustible materials. As found in the overseas freight industry.

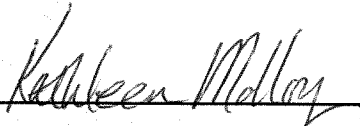
Definition of Fire Department Fire Station: A 24-hour, 365-day full time staffed department fire station with full time permanent employees (not volunteer and not a seasonal Fire Station) equipped to respond to a full range of emergencies.

This policy only applies within the Santa Cruz County Fire jurisdiction (CSA 48) and within the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District.

Shipping containers must be painted suitable colors (earth tones or colors that blend into surroundings). The shipping containers must be placed in relatively flat areas, to avoid potential grading, and areas not visible to the public (if possible). If a shipping container may be visible from an agricultural vista or a scenic roadway it must be screened with an appropriate agricultural buffer.



Ian Larkin
Santa Cruz County Fire



Kathleen Molloy
Planning Director