

12-05 - Patrol Deputies' Guide on Cannabis (Marijuana) Grows

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services, (323) 890-5411



PATROL DEPUTIES' GUIDE ON CANNABIS (MARIJUANA) GROWS

A grow is activity involving the planning, growing, harvesting, drying, curing, grading, or trimming of cannabis (marijuana). This activity could be inside a structure or outside. **All grows in Los Angeles County are illegal, except plants grown pursuant to the Adult Use of Marijuana Act (i.e., six plants for personal use).**

Cannabis grows are no different than other criminal investigations in regards to search and seizure laws. Once the cannabis is discovered, secure the location and if a search warrant is necessary to continue with the investigation.

Narcotics Bureau shall be notified if there are in excess of ten cannabis plants, theft of utility services, or any unusual circumstances. If a deputy has questions in the field, they may contact Narcotics Bureau for advice, at (562) 946-7125. Contact Sheriff's Information Bureau (SIB) for after-hours notifications, at (213) 229-2222. The Narcotics Bureau will determine if the incident will be their handle or a station/unit handle.

If you respond to a location and discover a cannabis grow (indoor or outdoor), consider the following safety issues:

- Air quality (i.e., mold, smells, chemical odors);
- Booby traps (i.e., explosive or flammable in nature);
- Faulty wiring at electrical breaker box;
- Unidentifiable chemicals in buckets, cans, or cups; or
- Faulty construction/modifications to walls, windows, gas lines, water lines, or electrical outlets.

Anyone claiming ownership of the property and/or cannabis shall be detained.

If a residence, survey the neighborhood and ask the following types of questions:

- Who did you see living in the house?
- Is there vehicle/pedestrian traffic in and out of the house at all hours?
- Any unusual smells (i.e., chemical or unfamiliar)?
- Windows covered all hours? and
- Hear fans/machinery all hours?

There are currently 18 different types of cannabis cultivation (grow) licenses issued by the California Department of Food and Agriculture. (See Business and Professions Code, section 26061(a), for a list of licenses and their specifications.) A cultivation (grow) license must be renewed yearly. The Department of Food and Agriculture, CalCannabis, has created a website to check if a license is valid:

<https://aca6.accela.com/CALCANNABIS/Cap/CapHome.aspx?module=Licenses>

If there is no cultivation license or an expired cultivation license, and the grow does not fall under 11362.1(a)(3) PC (the Adult Use of Marijuana Act), the grow should be treated and investigated as an illegal grow.

If you are investigating a grow and it appears the electrical meter has been unsafely bypassed, immediately contact Southern California Edison (SCE) at (800)427-2200.

An SCE investigator will respond, make the location safe, and determine the dollar amount of utilities stolen.

Additional agencies that may be of assistance during cannabis (marijuana) grow investigations:

- CalCannabis (916) 576-6404).
- If children are present at a grow location, contact the Multi Agency Response Team (MART), at (323) 869-6895. Contact SIB for after-hours notifications.
- For chemical spills inside of the location or if the chemical is poured down the drain, contact our

Department's HAZMAT, at (323) 881-7800.

In the event Narcotics Bureau assumes the handle of the investigation, responding deputies should remain at the scene for the following reasons:

- Uniform presence/officer safety;
- Assist with transport/booking of suspects; and
- Assist with breakdown of cannabis (marijuana) grow.

If the grow is a station/unit handle, at the conclusion of each disassembly operation, an assigned deputy will do the following safety steps:

- Turn off all power;
- Secure doors/windows; and
- Remove all coverings from windows to allow ventilation/light.

The handling patrol deputy is responsible for writing the first report even if Narcotics Bureau assumes the handle of the investigation.

The Narcotics Bureau sergeant will be notified and respond to all structure fires involving indoor cannabis (marijuana) grows. The fire department should also be notified to conduct a sampling of the air quality prior to any personnel entering the location.

If you have any questions regarding the content of this newsletter, please call or email Field Operations Support Services, at (323) 890-5411 or foss@lasd.org.
