

Industrial cannabis production in Queensland

What is industrial cannabis?

Industrial cannabis (*Cannabis sativa*) is specifically bred to contain tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) levels of no more than 1%. It does not have psychoactive properties.

Commercial applications of industrial cannabis

Interest in industrial cannabis has increased worldwide due to the diverse marketability of the crop. Fibre can be produced from the stem and oil can be extracted from the seed. Fibre and oil can be processed to make cosmetics, building materials, paper and textiles.

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) recently updated the Australia New Zealand Food Code to allow the sale of low-THC cannabis seed foods for human consumption.



Under the Act, licence holders are permitted to produce industrial cannabis seeds for low-THC cannabis seed-based foods. Seeds must be denatured to ensure they will not germinate. No other part of an industrial cannabis plant can be consumed.

What laws cover industrial cannabis production in Queensland?

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) administers Part 5B of the *Drugs Misuse Act 1986* (the Act) and the *Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987*. This legislation enables licensees to cultivate, harvest and process industrial cannabis on a commercial scale.

Do I need a licence?

Under the Act, a licence is required to lawfully conduct authorised activities associated industrial cannabis.

With the appropriate licence, you may:

- commercially **produce** industrial cannabis plants for fibre and seed
- conduct **research** into the use of industrial cannabis for commercial purposes.
- store, supply and **handle** industrial cannabis seed.

NOTE: Dangerous drug offences may still apply to any other dealings with cannabis unless you hold the relevant licence and conduct activities in accordance with the conditions of the licence.

Licence types

Table 1 – Summary of industrial cannabis licence types and authorisations

Grower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce industrial cannabis fibre and seed. • Supply industrial cannabis fibre and seed to authorised persons. • Produce industrial cannabis seed for food products.
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess industrial cannabis plants and seed for research purposes. • Conduct breeding programs and other research activities. • Deal with higher level THC industrial cannabis.
Seed Handler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess industrial cannabis seed for the purpose of storing, denaturing, manufacturing and trading in the seed. • Supply industrial cannabis and processed seed to authorised persons.

Licences are issued for a maximum term of three years.

How can I obtain an industrial cannabis licence?

Contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 to discuss your licensing requirements and to obtain the relevant forms. Once you have applied, Biosecurity Queensland will assess your application and determine if you are fit and proper to hold a licence.

Am I eligible?

Individuals or corporations may apply for an industrial cannabis licence.

Applicants must meet the criteria of being fit and proper to hold a licence. The fit and proper criteria considers:

- your criminal record
- any previous licence breaches
- whether you are currently bankrupt
- if you have a suitable location for the licenced activities
- if you have the appropriate skills to produce/conduct research on industrial cannabis.

Can I produce industrial cannabis for medicinal purposes?

The Act does not allow people to produce industrial cannabis for medicinal use, however, researcher licensees may be able to supply research cannabis seed to a person licensed under the Commonwealth *Narcotic Drugs Act 1967*.

Medicinal cannabis production and associated activities are managed by the Commonwealth Office of Drug Control. Call (02) 6232 8433 or visit odc.gov.au for more information on researching and cultivating industrial cannabis for medicinal purposes.

Fees and obligations

Fees are charged for the initial licence application and subsequent renewals. There are also costs associated with sample testing and audits.

Licensees must fulfil record keeping and reporting obligations and can expect to be audited at least once a year, even if they are not actively producing industrial cannabis.

Read more about licensing obligations at legislation.qld.gov.au in:

- *Drugs Misuse Act 1986* (Qld), Part 5B
- *Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987* (Qld), Part 4

Further information

For more information on producing, processing and marketing industrial cannabis in Queensland contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit business.qld.gov.au.

