Toolkit · Operate SOP Updated November 22, 2026

Testing and Sampling SOP

The testing requirements in the Cannabis Control Act and the CCA draft rules, each cited: the mandatory test panel, testing facility licensing and accreditation, batch size limits, sample collection on camera, sample labels and chain of custody, holds while results are pending, pass limits, remediation, certificates of analysis, failed-result reporting and random testing.

Who needs it: Cultivation facilities, processing facilities and microbusinesses (batches tested before sale); Testing facilities (licensing, sample collection and reporting); Retail stores (certificates of analysis on request).

Rule basis: Code of Virginia §§ 4.1-606 B 4, 4.1-703 C, 4.1-806, 4.1-1403, 4.1-1404, 4.1-1405 A 9, 4.1-1407 B; draft rules 3VAC10-40-30 F, 3VAC10-40-50, 3VAC10-50-20 D, -50 C, -70, 3VAC10-60-10 to -50, 3VAC10-70-20 B 3 h and m (proposed); CCA draft provisions for CPHAC review (Nov. 2026).

Citations starting **3VAC10** are the Cannabis Control Authority's draft proposed adult-use regulations dated September 9, 2026: **proposed, not final, may change**. Citations starting **§ 4.1** are the Code of Virginia as amended by HB 30, Chapter 1 (2026). The section "What other states required or scored" is reference only and is not Virginia law.

We report what the law says. Not legal advice; see the disclaimer.

The Cannabis Control Act bars a licensee from selling marijuana to a consumer or another licensee until a representative sample passes mandatory testing for contaminants and label accuracy, sets the minimum test panel, and requires testing facilities to hold ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation. The CCA's draft rules (Chapter 60) set batch sizes, sampling procedures, pass limits and certificate of analysis handling. Citations to 3VAC10 are to the CCA's draft regulations dated Sept. 9, 2026 (proposed, not final; they may change before adoption). A November 2026 CCA document listing

revised provisions for Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council (CPHAC) review is cited separately where its wording differs; the CCA states the whole of Chapter 60 is under CPHAC review.

Testing rules for regulated hemp products sold at retail are in the Hemp retail compliance checklist.

What Virginia requires

Mandatory testing (statute)

- The Board establishes a testing program for marijuana, marijuana products and regulated hemp products (Code of Virginia § 4.1-606 B 4).
- Before selling or distributing to a consumer or another licensee, a licensee submits a representative sample, "not to exceed an amount of the total harvest or batch as established by the Board," to a licensed testing facility (§ 4.1-1403).
- The Board's regulations set testing practices, methods and standards; quality control; equipment certification and calibration; testing facility recordkeeping; disposal of waste; reporting of results; the contaminants tested for; and the maximum allowable level of each (§ 4.1-1403).
- A licensee may not sell or distribute marijuana to a consumer or another licensee unless mandatory testing has shown (i) it does not exceed the maximum allowable level of any contaminant injurious to health for which testing is required and (ii) its labeling is correct (§ 4.1-1404 A).
- Mandatory testing includes at minimum: residual solvents (not required for botanical marijuana), heavy metals, microbiological contaminants, mycotoxins, pesticide chemical residue, and active ingredient analysis; testing is performed "on the final form in which the marijuana or marijuana product will be consumed" (§ 4.1-1404 B).
- A licensee keeps a record of all mandatory testing, with a description of the product provided, the identity of the testing facility, and the results (§ 4.1-1404 C).

- If results exceed the allowable THC or contaminant level, the testing facility immediately quarantines, documents and properly destroys the product unless remediation can bring it into compliance, and notifies the Board within seven days of completing the test; research-and-development tests (with prior notice to the facility) and tests for non-licensees are exempt from the notice (§ 4.1-1404 D).
- Product tested at another licensee's direction may be sold without retesting if it passed, the testing is documented, tracking from immature plant to retail sale has been maintained, and it has not been further processed or altered (§ 4.1-1404 E).
- Licensees destroy batches whose samples show noncompliance unless remediation can bring them into compliance (§ 4.1-1404 F).
- Licensees comply with all requests for samples for random testing by a state-owned or state-approved laboratory (§ 4.1-1404 G).
- Labels carry a QR code or other Board-prescribed means linking to the certificate of analysis from a licensed testing facility stating the total THC of the product or batch (§ 4.1-1405 A 9).
- A product registration application includes total THC and total CBD "based on laboratory testing results for the marijuana or marijuana product formulation" (§ 4.1-1407 B 1).

Testing facility licensing (statute and draft)

- A testing facility may develop, research, transport or test marijuana and other substances (§ 4.1-806 A), for itself, another licensee, or a person testing marijuana for lawful personal use (§ 4.1-806 B).
- To be licensed, a testing facility obtains and maintains ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation from a third-party accrediting body (§ 4.1-806 D).
- A person with an interest in a testing facility license may not have any interest in a cultivation, processing, transporter, retail or microbusiness license (§ 4.1-806 F).
- Testing facilities keep the names and addresses of all licensees or persons who submit marijuana for testing (§ 4.1-703 C).

- The draft adds that a testing facility license requires: independence from all persons in the Virginia marijuana and hemp industry (no direct or indirect financial interest in a pharmacist, certifying practitioner, marijuana establishment, hemp grower or processor, hemp retailer or other entity that may benefit); a person overseeing testing with a master's degree in chemical or biological sciences and two years of post-degree lab experience, or a bachelor's degree and four years; a controlled substances registration under § 54.1-3423; proof of ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation or of an application for it; and compliance with a transportation protocol (3VAC10-60-20 1 to 5, draft).
- Accreditation must be received within 18 months of applying, with extensions for good cause; proof of accreditation is sent to the Board within five business days; nonaccredited methods may be used only while an accreditation application is pending and not beyond 18 months; loss of accreditation is reported within 24 hours and testing stops immediately (3VAC10-60-20 4 a to d, draft).
- The CPHAC review document adds that the facility reports to the CCA any quality-related issues or other information reported to its accrediting body, within 24 hours of the original notification to that body (CCA draft provisions for CPHAC review, Nov. 2026: 3VAC10-60-20 (6)).
- Testing facility staff may enter an establishment solely to identify and collect test samples (3VAC10-40-30 F, draft).

Batches and sample collection (draft)

- Before sale of concentrate, a test sample from each homogenized batch is made available for testing for microbiological contaminants, mycotoxins, heavy metals, residual solvents and pesticide chemical residue, plus an active ingredient analysis and terpenes profile (3VAC10-60-40 A, draft).
- Before sale of botanical marijuana, a test sample from each harvest batch is made available for testing for microbiological contaminants, mycotoxins, heavy metals, pesticide chemical residue, water activity and moisture content, plus an active ingredient analysis and terpenes profile (3VAC10-60-40 B, draft).

- The CPHAC review version requires the originating establishment, at least 24 hours before sample collection, to notify the testing facility and receive confirmation that it is prepared to receive the samples once collected and entered into the seed-to-sale system, and allows samples to be collected by either the originating establishment or the testing facility (CCA draft provisions for CPHAC review, Nov. 2026: 3VAC10-60-40 (A)).
- Harvest lots are separated into batches of no more than 50 pounds, and concentrate production lots into batches of no more than 20,000 units; each batch gets a unique batch number documented in the seed-to-sale system for at least three years (3VAC10-60-40 C, draft).
- The establishment keeps policies and procedures for obtaining representative homogenous samples while maintaining sample integrity (3VAC10-60-40 D, draft).
- The testing facility sets the minimum sample size, which is at least 0.5% of the batch mass; if reserve samples are required, primary and reserve samples are collected at the same time and homogenously (3VAC10-60-40 D 1, draft).
- Sample collection is conducted under video surveillance; the designated sample collector keeps the recording for 30 days and a separate record of each sampling with the date and time, the business name and license number of origin, the unique batch number of each batch sampled, and the collector's name (3VAC10-60-40 D 2, draft).
- Sampling policies and procedures include: (1) a consistent, statistically valid sample selection method appropriate to the matrix; (2) sampling practices and equipment, including aseptic technique, sanitized tools, personal protective equipment and sampling containers; (3) documentation of observations and procedures; (4) containers sealed immediately after collection that indicate tampering and compromised integrity; (5) sample labels; (6) transport that does not endanger sample integrity and follows CCA transport requirements; and (7) chain of custody documentation for each sample, kept at least three years (3VAC10-60-40 E, draft).
- Each sample label shows the product's name, unique sample identification number, license number of the sampling location, batch number, date the sample was taken, identity of the collector, sample weight, and a "FOR TESTING PURPOSES ONLY" label (3VAC10-60-40 E 5, draft).

- The designated sample collector is trained on the sampling procedures, has access to restricted areas and to the entire batch, completes chain of custody paperwork including entering sample details in the seed-to-sale system, and follows any additional CCA guidance (3VAC10-60-40 F, draft). The CPHAC review version provides that the collector may be employed by the originating establishment or by the testing facility performing the tests (CCA draft provisions for CPHAC review, Nov. 2026: 3VAC10-60-40 (E)).
- The testing facility visually inspects samples for homogeneity and rejects heterogeneous samples (3VAC10-60-40 G, draft).
- From sampling until results are provided, the entire batch (except the samples) is segregated and withheld from use and kept in a secure, cool and dry location (3VAC10-60-40 H, draft).
- The originating establishment requires the testing facility to immediately return or properly dispose of samples after testing (3VAC10-60-40 I, draft).

Pass limits (draft)

Test	Concentrate	Botanical marijuana	Cite
Microbiological	Table 1 of Section 1111 of the United States Pharmacopeia	Most current American Herbal Pharmacopoeia Cannabis Inflorescence Standards	3VAC10-60-50 B 1, C 1
Mycotoxins	Sum of aflatoxins B1, B2, G1, G2 and ochratoxin A under 20 ppb	Same	3VAC10-60-50 B 2, C 2
Arsenic	Under 10 ppm	Under 10 ppm	3VAC10-60-50 B 3, C 3
Cadmium	Under 4.1 ppm	Under 4.1 ppm	3VAC10-60-50 B 3, C 3

Test	Concentrate	Botanical marijuana	Cite
Lead	Under 10 ppm	Under 10 ppm	3VAC10-60-50 B 3, C 3
Mercury	Under 2 ppm	Under 2 ppm	3VAC10-60-50 B 3, C 3
Pesticide chemical residue	Most stringent tolerance for any food item in 40 CFR Part 180, Subpart C	Same	3VAC10-60-50 B 4, C 4
Residual solvents	290 ppm or less hexane; 5,000 ppm or less of other Board-approved solvents	Not listed	3VAC10-60-50 B 6
Water activity and moisture	Not listed	Water activity not over 0.65 Aw; moisture not over 15%	3VAC10-60-50 C 6
Active ingredients	THC, THC-A, CBD and CBDA	Total THC and total CBD	3VAC10-60-50 B 5, C 5

- The CPHAC review document states that the pesticide provisions list the specific pesticides rather than citing 40 CFR Part 180 (CCA draft provisions for CPHAC review, Nov. 2026: 3VAC10-60-50 (B)(4) and (C)(4)); the list itself is not reproduced in that document.

Remediation (draft)

- Concentrate that fails the microbiological, mycotoxin, heavy metal or residual solvent test may be remediated by further processing and then retested for microbiological, mycotoxin, heavy metal, pesticide residue and residual solvents, with an active ingredient analysis and terpenes profile (3VAC10-60-30 A, draft).

- Concentrate that fails the pesticide residue test cannot be remediated (3VAC10-60-30 B, draft).
- Botanical marijuana that fails the microbiological, mycotoxin, heavy metal, water activity or moisture test may be remediated and retested on the full botanical panel; if it fails retesting it may be processed into concentrate, which must meet all concentrate standards, unless the failure relates to pesticides, in which case it is disposed of (3VAC10-60-30 C, draft).
- Botanical marijuana that fails the pesticide residue test cannot be remediated (3VAC10-60-30 D, draft).

After results (draft)

- A licensed testing facility handles, tests or analyzes regulated products (3VAC10-60-50 A, draft).
- If a sample passes all required tests, the entire batch may be used for packaging and labeling for sale; an expiration date is assigned based on validated stability testing, except that stability testing is not required for an expiration date 12 months or less from the testing date; no product may require time and temperature control for safety (3VAC10-60-50 D, draft). Labels show an expiration date of 12 months or less from testing unless supported by stability testing (3VAC10-70-20 B 3 h, draft).
- The testing facility provides a certificate of analysis to the originating establishment, which uploads it to the seed-to-sale system; the certificate is made available to patients or consumers on request (3VAC10-60-50 E and 3VAC10-50-20 D, draft).
- The establishment requires the testing facility to file with the Board an electronic copy of each result for any batch that fails, at the same time it sends the results to the establishment; the facility keeps results available to the Board (3VAC10-60-50 F, draft).
- “Under no circumstances” may an establishment sell a product before the testing facility has completed testing and provided a certificate of analysis (3VAC10-60-50 G, draft).

- Each establishment has lab results available on request to patients, parents, legal guardians, registered agents, certifying practitioners, consumers, the Board or its agent (3VAC10-60-50 H, draft).
- The CCA may collect and test random samples and compare its results with those reported by testing facilities (3VAC10-60-50 I, draft).
- Labels show a pass or fail rating based on required tests or a readable QR code to the certificate of analysis (3VAC10-70-20 B 3 m, draft).

Testing tied to distribution and registration (draft)

- Tested, packaged and labeled product may be wholesale distributed between establishments; untested product may move only between facilities licensed to process, label and package (3VAC10-40-50 A and B, draft).
- A wholesale distributor provides the receiver a copy of the lab results or electronic access to them (3VAC10-40-50 E, draft).
- Each registered product name is associated with a specific laboratory test that includes total CBD and total THC, a terpenes profile, and all active ingredients (THC, THC-A, CBD, CBDA) (3VAC10-50-70 A, draft).
- Two products may carry the same registered name only if each listed active ingredient varies by no more than 15%, or within 0.5 mg per dose where total THC or CBD is 5 mg or less per dose (3VAC10-50-70 B, draft).
- Industrial hemp extract used in marijuana products is subject to the same third-party testing as marijuana extract, verified by a Virginia-licensed testing facility, and the hemp dealer or processor provides results before the extract is acquired (3VAC10-50-50 C, draft).

Records and forms the rules name

Mandatory testing record (contents listed in § 4.1-1404 C)

Description of product provided to the testing facility	Identity of the testing facility	Results of the mandatory test

Sampling record (fields listed in 3VAC10-60-40 D 2, draft)

Date and time of sample collection	Business name and license number of origin	Unique batch number of each batch sampled	Name of designated sample collector

Sample label (fields listed in 3VAC10-60-40 E 5, draft)

Field	Entry
Product name	
Unique sample identification number	
License number of the sampling location	
Batch number	
Date the sample was taken	
Identity of the person who collected the sample	
Sample weight	
“FOR TESTING PURPOSES ONLY”	

What the law does not say

- The draft rules do not set a turnaround time for testing facilities.

- The draft rules do not set a potency tolerance between labeled and tested THC other than the registration deviation limits in § 4.1-1407 D and 3VAC10-50-70 B.
- The draft rules do not set separate contaminant limits for edible products; the pass limits are written for concentrate and botanical marijuana.

What other states required or scored

Not required in Virginia. Shown so applicants can see what other regulators asked for.

Massachusetts (935 CMR 500.160)

- Massachusetts requires testing by an Independent Testing Laboratory under Commission protocols, including the Protocol for Sampling and Analysis of Finished Marijuana and Marijuana Products (935 CMR 500.160(1)).
- Tests cover the cannabinoid profile and contaminants including mold, mildew, heavy metals, plant growth regulators and pesticides; vaporizer products are also screened for heavy metals and Vitamin E Acetate (935 CMR 500.160(2)).
- A written policy governs failing results, including notice to the Commission within 72 hours when contamination cannot be remediated and the batch is disposed of (935 CMR 500.160(4)(a)).
- Both the establishment and the laboratory notify the Commission separately, and the establishment's notice proposes a plan for destruction and for assessing the contamination source (935 CMR 500.160(4)(b)-(c)).
- Test results are kept at least one year and are valid for one year; product with a test date over one year old is expired until retested (935 CMR 500.160(5)).
- Seeds are exempt from testing, and clones are tested but exempt from metals testing (935 CMR 500.160(6)-(7)).

New Jersey (N.J.A.C. 17:30-19)

- New Jersey requires every batch of usable cannabis and every lot of cannabis products to be tested by a licensed testing laboratory (N.J.A.C. 17:30-19.2(a)).

- Product is sampled and tested before packaging, held in secure segregated storage, and released only after a written lab report confirms it meets specifications (N.J.A.C. 17:30-19.2(b)).
- A retention sample of each released batch or lot is kept in the distribution container under label storage conditions (N.J.A.C. 17:30-19.5(a)).
- Portions of the retention sample go to the lab for stability testing at six and 12 months to check potency and "support or debunk the listed expiration date" (N.J.A.C. 17:30-19.5(b)-(c)).

Maryland (COMAR 14.17)

- Maryland requires finished products to be tested by an Administration-authorized independent laboratory before any sale, distribution or dispensing (COMAR 14.17.13.04A).
- Growers hold cannabis in secure, segregated storage until release and obtain a certificate of analysis for each batch (COMAR 14.17.10.03D(3)-(4)).
- A batch produced with a deviation from SOPs may be released only after independent testing shows it meets the variety specification and that determination is recorded (COMAR 14.17.10.03D(1)(d)).
- A batch that fails action limits may be reworked under SOPs and must then be resampled and retested (COMAR 14.17.10.03D(5)(b)).
- After a quality or safety complaint, part of the retention sample is sent to an independent laboratory (COMAR 14.17.14.01C(1)(c)).

New York (9 NYCRR Part 125)

- New York's inventory system records all samples sent to independent laboratories, unused portions returned, and quality assurance test results (9 NYCRR 125.8(a)(2)(iv)).
- Laboratory testing results for each lot or batch are kept as records for at least five years (9 NYCRR 125.13(a), (c)(8)).

Sources checked 2026-11-22.

- Cannabis Control Commission, 935 CMR 500.000 (effective 09-11-26)

- NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission, N.J.A.C. 17:30 Personal Use Cannabis Rules
- COMAR 14.17.13.04, Product Testing
- COMAR 14.17.10.03, Cannabis Grower Controls
- COMAR 14.17.14.01, Complaints, Adverse Events, and Recall
- Office of Cannabis Management, Express Terms adopting Parts 118-125 and 131 (9 NYCRR)

Sources

- Code of Virginia § 4.1-606 (Regulations of the Board)
- Code of Virginia § 4.1-703 (Records of licensees)
- Code of Virginia § 4.1-806 (Marijuana testing facility license)
- Code of Virginia § 4.1-1403 (Board to establish regulations for marijuana testing)
- Code of Virginia § 4.1-1404 (Mandatory testing)
- Code of Virginia § 4.1-1405 (Labeling and packaging requirements)
- Code of Virginia § 4.1-1407 (Product registration requirements)
- CCA draft adult-use regulations, Sept. 9, 2026 (proposed, not final): 3VAC10-40, 3VAC10-50, 3VAC10-60, 3VAC10-70
- CCA, Draft Regulation Provisions for CPHAC Review (Nov. 2026)

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