



Home Office

## Low THC Cannabis (Industrial Hemp) Licensing Factsheet

This factsheet provides information on the Licensing process for Low THC Cannabis (industrial Hemp). It is intended for existing licensees and prospective growers who need to apply for a licence.

### I want to grow cannabis (industrial hemp): do I need a licence?

Yes:

- A licence is required to cover both cultivation and possession.
- The genus *Cannabis* is a controlled drug in Class B of The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (MDA and Schedule 1 of The Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001). Under these Regulations, a licence may be issued authorising cultivation. Low THC cannabis grown for the commercial production of industrial hemp fibre or the pressing of seed for oil are purposes for which licences may be issued where- after harvesting- non-controlled parts of the plant are used and controlled parts of the plant are retted at the licensed location or otherwise lawfully disposed of.
- Each grower must be individually licensed.

### How do I apply?

- Online, via the Home Office Drugs Licensing website:  
<https://eforms.homeoffice.gov.uk/outreach/DrugsConsole.ofml>
- We do not accept applications by post or e-mail.

### What is the process for making a licence application?

We have produced a dedicated application form for industrial hemp cultivation licences, and a downloadable application guide to help you complete the application, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/controlled-drugs-licences-fees-and-returns#industrial-hemp>

In summary, you need to

- Obtain an 'iCasework web app' login
- Apply for your enhanced DBS check using the links available on the Home Office website, ensuring the Home Office is noted as the relevant body.
- Provide payment details for the licence fee, when contacted by the Home Office (see How do I pay a fee? below)
- Fully complete and submit the application form via the web portal
- If you have held a licence with us before, ensure you have submitted your Annual Grower Statements previously.
- Record and retain your application reference number

### Is there a fee payable?

- Yes, there is a fee payable for a low THC content cultivate/ possess licence. A new licence application to cultivate cannabis with a THC content of 0.2% or lower will cost £580. If you have previously grown in the 2010 season the 'renewal' fee of £326 will apply. If a compliance visit is required the fee will be £1371 but we envisage most applications will not need a visit.
- This fees structure is considerably lower than a new licence application to cultivate high THC Cannabis which costs £4700 and recognises the light touch licensing regime applied. Fee levels have been calculated on a full-cost recovery basis and will be periodically reviewed.

#### How do I pay a fee?

- Payment information must be provided to enable the application to be submitted, but payment is not taken at that stage.
- Assuming your application is approved in principle, we will issue you an invoice by email for immediate payment via our Shared Service Centre.
- Licences will not be issued without payment being received.
- If you cultivate before paying for, and receiving your licence, you will be doing so unlawfully.

#### What is the light touch regime?

- This refers to the proportionate processes by which licence applications are generally considered on the papers; and reflects the fact that in the vast majority of applications we do not expect to have to undertake a site or compliance visit.

#### What restrictions are there on where I plant the crop?

- In the past the crop has been screened and must have been planted in locations away from schools, public rights of way or vehicular access. In recognition of hemp fibre becoming a more widely used industrial crop, we do not wish to be prescriptive. However, we ask you to site the crop sensitively.

#### Do I need to inform you of where I plant the seed? What if this changes?

- EU 'approved' seed varieties must be sown. We need to maintain a record of planting locations, so you should inform us of any changes within the growing season. Please email [Industrialhemplicensing@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Industrialhemplicensing@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) quoting your application reference or licence number with full details of any changes.
- We intend to issue the licence itself to cover a whole farm location so we should not need to amend the licence itself.
- Renting land on an adjacent farm will need to be licensed and specifically documented on the licence, so, if you rent additional fields you must contact us to discuss an amendment to your licence.
- You should inform your local police of your growing locations.

#### How long is a licence valid for?

With effect from the 2012 growing season, licences are typically issued with a validity of **three growing seasons**- so for up to three years validity.

- Licenses for the cultivation of low-THC hemp are always issued to expire on 31 December. If a licence application is approved on 31 March 2014, we

would issue a licence to expire on 31 December 2016, covering the 2014, 15 and 16 growing seasons.

- However, if an application is made late and approved on 31 July 2014, a grower may lose the benefit of that growing season as a licence would be issued to expire on 31 December 2016.
- It is therefore in growers interests to ensure applications are submitted in a timely fashion.
- If there are substantive changes to a licence- for example amending growing locations outside of your farm's extent- a fee may be payable for this change as a new licence may need to be issued.

#### Are there any special requirements with a '3 year' licence?

Yes. Holders of a multi-growing season licence will be required to complete an 'Annual Licence Review Statement' at the start of growing season, typically by 1 May. Completion and submission of this proforma will be a mandatory requirement of the licence and without submission a licence may be revoked.

All relevant forms are available on our website.

#### Do I need to have a DBS check?

Yes. Since 12 October 2009 satisfactory completion of an enhanced DBS check has been a requirement applicable to all Controlled Drug and Precursor Chemical licence applicants.

- A fee is payable for an enhanced DBS check.
- Applications must be made via Capita recruitment vetting services, and the Home Office Drugs Licensing must be noted as the Registered Body. If this process is not followed, any check completed elsewhere is not transferable.
- Generally speaking, we will not ask you to obtain a further enhanced DBS check, where you obtained one for the purposes of drug licensing, within the last three years.
- A DBS application must have been lodged before you submit your application for a licence.

#### I rent the land: who needs a licence?

- The grower, as opposed to the owner of the land, must hold a Home Office licence.
- The grower may wish to notify his or her landlord of the cultivation and is responsible for ensuring they are complying with the terms of their lease or rental agreement.

#### I am growing at multiple locations- what should I do?

Each location must be properly and fully licensed. If you are growing within your farm extent, as a general rule this would be covered within your licence.

If you are growing at multiple locations, outside of your farm extent- for example renting land from a neighbour or in an adjacent village- you should contact us at [Industrialhemplicensing@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Industrialhemplicensing@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) and discuss the licensing arrangements that would apply to your situation. We may need to see copies of 'bare land' rental agreements.

When shall I apply?

Applications can be submitted immediately, and early application is encouraged. Please allow sufficient time for your application to be processed: you should allow a minimum of 2-4 weeks for a straightforward renewal application. Licences will not be issued until such time as the fee payment is received and time should be allowed for this process.

Contacts- Home Office- Drugs Licensing & Compliance:

**Please use our dedicated enquiry e-mail in the first instance**  
[Industrialhemplicensing@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Industrialhemplicensing@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

**Duty Compliance Officer- 020 7035 8972**