

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR**

James C. Kenney, Cabinet Secretary

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*The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.*

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**NMED supports cannabis worker safety***Occupational Health & Safety Bureau ready for rollout of recreational industry*

**SANTA FE** — With the imminent launch of recreational cannabis, the New Mexico Environment Department's Occupational Health & Safety Bureau (OHSB) reminds employers of their responsibilities to protect cannabis workers health and safety in the workplace.

Under the administration of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, the OHSB has grown from 28 to 64 staff members, partially in preparation for the rollout of the recreational cannabis industry. This was the first significant increase in the size and budget of the OHSB since 1984.

“The Environment Department supports a safe and robust cannabis workforce,” said **Environment Cabinet Secretary James Kenney**. “We will continue to advocate for New Mexico’s emerging cannabis employees to keep them safe at work.”

Employers in the cannabis industry are required to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and workplace standards applicable to the industry. Most hazards in the industry are covered by existing standards, and OHSB has discovered common violations of standards at medical cannabis workplaces in recent years. One hazard that has resulted in serious injury to workers in the medical cannabis industry in New Mexico and nationwide is the use of flammable liquids in extraction processes. After investigating such accidents in New Mexico, OHSB has observed violations related to storage and use of flammable liquids, emergency exits, fire protection, protective equipment, and employee training. OHSB expects business owners and management to identify and correct workplace hazards to prevent employee illness and injury.

As the non-medical adult use cannabis industry emerges, OHSB will engage in outreach, assistance and enforcement of health and safety regulations at cannabis establishments. Key considerations that cannabis industry employers need to consider include:

- Identification and control of workplace hazards
- Worker rights to raise health and safety concerns without fear of retaliation
- Availability of resources to assist in developing effective health and safety programs

“Worker injuries in the cannabis industry can be easily prevented by identifying and correcting hazards,” said **OHSB Chief Bob Genoway**. “The Bureau is prepared to provide assistance to those businesses who need help in complying with health and safety rules and, if necessary, will enforce those same rules in cases where employers fail to take appropriate steps to protect workers.”

The Environment Department offers free on-site consultations to employers with 250 or fewer employees. These consultations can help employers identify workplace hazards and find effective and economical solutions for eliminating or controlling them. The service is cost-free and confidential and there are no fines even if problems are discovered during the consultant's visit. The consultant can also assist companies in developing and implementing an injury and illness prevention program—an effective way to manage worker safety and health.

Employees who are injured on the job or have concerns about potential workplace health and safety violations must be able to report those matters to their employer without fear of discrimination or retaliation. Any employee who believes that workplace hazards are not being addressed by their employer, or who believe their employer is discriminating against them for raising health and safety concerns, may contact OHSB to file a complaint by calling 505-476-8700, sending an email to [Complaints.OSHA@state.nm.us](mailto:Complaints.OSHA@state.nm.us), or submitting a complaint through the [online complaint form](#).

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