

Planning Cannabis Events in Alberta

1. Define the Event's Intent and Format

Clarify your event's type and goal:

- Is it **public or private**?
 - Is the focus **educational, promotional, cultural, or commercial**?
 - Will cannabis be **consumed, discussed, or sold** (legally through licensees)?
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2. Choose a Suitable Venue

- Ensure the venue allows cannabis-related activity under its lease or ownership agreements.
- Confirm zoning compliance with **City of Edmonton's bylaws**.
- **Indoor consumption** is generally only allowed in private residences or approved designated areas.

Check:

- **City of Edmonton Public Places Bylaw 14614**
- Prohibited cannabis zones near schools, hospitals, rec centers, and city-owned attractions.

Challenge: Many venues prohibit cannabis use outright. Outdoor festivals may need to create fenced, age-gated consumption zones with signage and security.

3. Understand Cannabis License & Permitting Requirements

- **AGLC does NOT issue cannabis event-specific licenses.**
- If serving alcohol: apply for a **Special Event Liquor License**.
- Only **licensed retailers** can sell cannabis on-site, and must follow AGLC's strict promotional and operational rules.
- **Cannabis sampling or gifting is prohibited** by federal law and AGLC policy.

Relevant guides:

- AGLC [Retail Cannabis Store Handbook](#)
- AGLC [Cannabis Representative Handbook](#)

Challenge: Retailers at the event must avoid inducements and cannot offer samples or contests. Many misunderstand this and unintentionally breach federal or AGLC regulations.

4. Design Promotional & Educational Content with Care

All promotional activity must comply with:

- **Federal Cannabis Act**
- **Health Canada restrictions on advertising**
- **AGLC promotional guidelines**

Avoid:

- Targeting minors (must be age-gated)
 - Testimonials or glamorization
 - Cross-promotions with alcohol
 - Celebrity endorsements or incentives to consume
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5. Obtain Municipal Approvals & Notify Authorities

Depending on the venue and event size, you may need:

- **Event Permit** from the City of Edmonton
- Adherence to **zoning rules, noise bylaws**, and **smoking regulations**
- Notifications to:
 - Edmonton Police Service (EPS)
 - Edmonton Fire Rescue Services (EFRS)
 - Alberta Health Services (AHS) if food/beverage is involved

Challenge: Public consumption is tightly regulated. Authorities may be skeptical without a clear plan showing how you'll enforce rules.

6. Submit a Proposal or Pre-Event Inquiry to AGLC (Recommended)

There's no formal cannabis event application, but you should:

- Draft a **detailed event proposal** (intent, venue, vendors, harm reduction measures)
- Send it to AGLC's Cannabis Licensing team
- Request **written feedback or clarification**

This proactive step can prevent future violations and help guide your event to regulatory success.

7. Build in Harm Reduction & Safety Strategies

Include:

- **Trained staff** or volunteers to educate and assist attendees
- **Transportation support** (e.g., public transit, Uber partnerships)
- **Signage and staff enforcement** of age restrictions and consumption zones
- First aid and wellness support on-site

These steps will gain favor with both public health officials and regulators.

8. Secure Insurance & Finalize Event Logistics

- Obtain **liability insurance** that covers cannabis-related risk (can be expensive and niche)
 - Ensure all vendors and sponsors are compliant
 - Set up **security, fencing, signage, age checks**, and waste disposal
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9. Host the Event with Compliance in Mind

- Monitor consumption areas for safety and overuse
 - Document your efforts (photos, incident logs, education stats)
 - Be ready for an **AGLC or municipal inspection**
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10. Post-Event Reporting (If Required)

If the event involves a licensed cannabis retailer or promotional activity:

- Submit follow-up documentation to AGLC, if requested
- Highlight how you met harm reduction goals and respected regulations