California cannabis camera requirements

A summary of the surveillance requirements at California Code of Regulations, title 4, section 15044, administered by the Department of Cannabis Control. Verified as of 25 August 2026.

Verified as of 25 August 2026 against the regulation text. Regulations change. Before you rely on any line in this document, check the current text or have your counsel do it. **This is a summary, not legal advice, and it is not a substitute for reading the regulation. There is no such thing as a Department-approved camera vendor.** The licence obligations sit with you as the cannabis licensee, not with your installer. We are not a cannabis licensee and we are not registered with or approved by the Department.

The technical minimums

Stated in the regulation as minimums, not as targets. A system that meets them exactly meets them exactly.

Recording schedule	Continuously, **24 hours a day**. A system cannot meet the requirement by recording only on motion or only during opening hours.
Minimum resolution	**1280 × 720 pixels.**
Minimum frame rate	**15 frames per second.**
Minimum retention	**90 calendar days.** This is the figure that drives the whole storage design, because it applies to continuous recording rather than to event clips.
Time accuracy	Time is measured per **US NIST** standards.
Failure notification	A **failure-notification system** is required, telling the licensee when the surveillance system is interrupted or fails.
Providing copies	Copies must be provided to the Department on request, within the time specified. Footage must therefore be retrievable and exportable, not merely present.

The areas that must be recorded — § 15044(a)(1)–(5)

- ☐ **Areas where cannabis is handled**
  Areas where cannabis goods are weighed, packed, stored, loaded and unloaded for transportation, prepared, or moved within the premises.
- ☐ **Limited-access areas**
  As defined for the premises.
- ☐ **Security rooms**
  Including the room itself.

- ☐ **The area storing the surveillance storage device**
  With **at least one camera recording the access points** to that area. The system has to watch its own recorder.

- ☐ **Entrances and exits — from BOTH indoor and outdoor vantage points**
  This is the requirement buyers most often miss. An entrance covered only from inside does not satisfy it. Each entrance and exit needs to be recorded from both sides, which changes the camera count and the exterior containment on almost every site.

The carve-out, and how narrow it is

The requirement does not apply to a premises authorised ***exclusively*** for cultivation. That word does a great deal of work. A microbusiness is not covered by it, and neither is a mixed site that does anything beyond cultivation. Do not assume the carve-out applies without checking the authorisation.

What this document deliberately does not contain

No fine, penalty or enforcement amount. No inspection-failure rate or any enforcement statistic. No camera counts, distances, storage sizes, prices or response times. No local jurisdiction permit specifics, because those differ by city and county and this document covers the state regulation only.

One point of care. Point of sale is not listed in § 15044 as a required area. The regulation lists categories of area, not POS by name. Covering the till is frequently a sensible design decision and it is often required by other obligations, but it should not be attributed to this section. We have seen that misattribution in circulation and it is worth knowing about.

Scope and boundaries

Commercial only. We work on commercial premises only and not on private residences.

Fire alarm is out of scope. We do not hold a C-10 or C-16, so we do not work on fire alarm systems; that is coordinated with your own licensed fire alarm contractor.

What our licences cover. CSLB #976737 — C-7 Low Voltage Systems authorises camera install and repair, structured cabling, intercom and low-voltage work. BSIS ACO #7501 covers monitored CCTV, intrusion alarm and access control. Both are verifiable with the issuing agency, and we would rather you checked than took our word for it.

We are not a regulator or an approved vendor. No body certifies an integrator as compliant with any of the rules summarised in this document. The obligations sit with you.

The fuller treatment, including how these requirements shape a design, is at sandiegocctvpros.com/industries/cannabis-dispensary/