

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)



April 6, 2023

To: Cannabis Licensees

Fr: Chandra Wax, LCB Director of Enforcement and Education

Re: Notice of Pesticide Contamination in Region of Okanogan County

I am writing to notify you of an emergent issue in Okanogan County regarding pesticide contamination.

LCB Enforcement and Education staff have identified a pattern of pesticide testing failures that point to product contamination in a [specific region of Okanogan County](#). Random testing of products from impacted locations has been completed with detectable levels of dichlorodiphenyldichloroethylene (DDE) and many exceed action levels. DDE is a remnant product of DDT -- a pesticide that was banned in the United States in the 1970s. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a [fact sheet on DDT, DDD, and DDE](#) exposure.

Background

For several years LCB has been taking random samples from licensed cannabis locations to screen for a broad range of pesticides. The LCB contracts with the state Dept. of Agriculture (WSDA) laboratory in Yakima to perform pesticide tests. The WSDA lab can currently detect 243 pesticides. Their testing includes DDT and its breakdown products such as DDE.

Currently, state-certified cannabis-testing labs are not required to screen for DDE among the 59 pesticides included in mandatory testing because DDE contamination above actionable levels has not emerged elsewhere. Therefore, licensees may not know the contamination exists unless their location was chosen by the LCB for random testing.

The cannabis crop possesses a unique vulnerability with respect to environmental contamination. The plants can absorb contaminants such as pesticides and heavy

metals to a much higher degree than many other plants. This unique characteristic poses a problem for producers growing cannabis. Cannabis that is concentrated into oils may subsequently concentrate any contamination by five to ten-fold.

Action Steps

To ensure public safety and health, The LCB is taking the following actions:

Immediate Actions

- Placing administrative holds on licensees in the affected geographic area with above actionable limits of DDE;
- Upon confirmation that DDE exists in the soil in this region, placing administrative holds on all licensees in the geographic area;
- Requesting a list of all products distributed since August 2022 from all licensees in the geographic area;
- Securing and testing on-shelf products from all 18 licensees in the geographical area; and
- Requesting the licensees in the geographic area with DDE tests above actionable limits conduct a licensee-initiated recall on all products.

Future Actions

The LCB will soon:

- Initiate emergency rulemaking to require a result of 50% of the actionable level of DDE for any plants grown in the soil from this geographical region;
- Initiate long-term rulemaking requiring DDD and DDE testing;
- Work with appropriate state agencies to conduct soil and water testing in this defined geographical region; and
- LCB Enforcement and Education Division employees will conduct ongoing product testing in the defined geographical region.

Next Steps

The LCB will soon be scheduling an online meeting with the 18 affected licensees to share additional information, hear concerns and answer questions. In addition, the WSDA is prioritizing product sample testing from the crops in this region. As the agency learns more from the soil and product testing, we will communicate again with any appropriate additional information.

In the meantime, licensees are encouraged to speak with their LCB enforcement officer or compliance consultant with specific questions or concerns.

###