



## Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Policy Updates 2024

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### There are two agencies that oversee much of the alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis industries

- [Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission \(ATCC\)](#)
  - The ATCC regulates the alcohol and tobacco industries
  - Processes licenses for alcohol manufacturers and wholesalers, in addition to a number of special licenses and permits such as statewide caterers license and various event permits
  - Processes licenses for tobacco manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers
  - The Field Enforcement Operations Bureau enforces regulations on the above industries
  - Focuses on cannabis issues primarily related to unlicensed market
  - Alcohol retailers are licensed and enforcement performed through local liquor boards
- [Maryland Cannabis Administration \(MCA\)](#)
  - Licenses and registers cannabis businesses, agents, patients, and caregivers
  - Performs inspections to ensure compliance of licenses and registered businesses to ensure compliance
  - Develops educational materials
  - Performs research and adopts regulations to govern the industry

### Alcohol legislation

- **Failed: SB833/HB637**—A “cocktails to-go” bill failed that would have allowed for the sale of alcohol for off-premise consumption.
- **Failed: SB1139/HB847**—A bill that would have allowed grocery stores to sell alcohol
- **Signed by Governor: SB456/HB808**—A bill passed that allows for alcohol delivery by third parties such as Door Dash. The delivery person must be at least 21 and trained in alcohol awareness. Jurisdictions can opt in or out of this. The bill went into effect July 1.

### Tobacco legislation

- **Signed by Governor: SB244/HB238**—Clean Indoor Air Act revisions. The Act already covered the smoking of tobacco, cannabis, and hemp. This bill adds vaping to the prohibited conduct. On-site consumption sites are not covered by the vaping prohibition; however, local governments have some authority to prohibit/restrict the types of products used. Also convenes an MDH workgroup to study the issuance of alcohol licenses to tobacconists. This comes out of prior bills where cigar bars wanted to be issued alcohol licenses. There are 13-14 of these types of licenses grandfathered in throughout the state, so there is a moratorium on new licenses until this can be studied—the report is due June 2025.
- **Signed by Governor: SB220/HB42**—Public Health Services Protections was revised to remove the military exemption from the ban on purchase of tobacco products, paraphernalia, and vaping devices by individuals under 21. Maryland had created this exemption to the federal law and this removes that exemption.

## Cannabis legislation

- **Failed: SB399**—A bill that would have allowed **outdoor advertising of cannabis failed** in committee. Eleven members of the MD Collaborative Governance Council submitted informational testimony citing research on the impact of cannabis billboards on youth.
- **Failed: SB513/HB525**—A bill that would have prohibited employers from taking adverse employment actions against an employee for their legal cannabis use outside of work hours. This bill is likely to be introduced again
- **Signed by Governor: SB537/HB805**—Cannabis Licensee Location Restrictions creates a provision allowing community members to challenge the renewal of a cannabis business' license if it has engaged in bad behavior. When ten people sign a petition and submit it to the MD Cannabis Administration, it triggers a hearing, held before the license is renewed. Those signing must be within 1000 feet of the business. Local governments cannot set a zoning requirement that is more restrictive than the state standard. Local governments can require dispensaries be located up to 1/2 mile away from each other to avoid clustering.
- **Signed by Governor: HB253**—Cannabis Reform Act Alterations prohibits cannabis businesses from sponsoring events unless at least 85% of audience is expected to be adults; creates a new license category—nursery license. This licensee can sell seeds/seedlings to those in the business. Restricts content of signs placed on the outside of a cannabis business – can only be used to identify the business to the public (not products).