The following guidance is provided by the Maryland Cannabis Administration (MCA) to assist cannabis licensees in complying with State laws and regulations governing the cannabis industry. This document is not legal advice. It is meant to highlight regulatory changes for licensees. Please consult an attorney if you have any questions regarding the legal requirements that apply.

Maryland Medical Cannabis Certification for Fire and Rescue Public Safety Employees FAQs

On October 1, 2026, Chapter 183 of 2026 became effective. This statute establishes certain workplace protections for fire and rescue public safety employees related to cannabis use. MCA is providing this information to assist interested parties understand this legislative change and how it may impact them.

Who is a fire and rescue public safety employee?

- A firefighter, emergency medical technician, cardiac rescue technician, or a paramedic employed by a municipal corporation, a county in Maryland, the state of Maryland, Maryland's airport authority, or a fire control district.
- See State Government Article § 20–601(e) for more details.

Can fire and rescue public safety employees consume cannabis in the state of Maryland?

- Cannabis consumption is legal in the state of Maryland for adults 21 years or older.
- As of October 1, 2026, on the basis of a fire and rescue public safety employee's possession of a valid written certification issued by a certifying provider or testing positive for cannabis components or metabolites while holding a valid written certification, an employer may not:
    - Discipline, discharge, or otherwise discriminate against with regard to an employee's compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment; or
    - Limit, segregate, or classify its employees in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive the fire and rescue public safety employee of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect the fire and rescue public safety employee's status as an employee.
- Nothing in Maryland state law prohibits an employer from: (1) adopting policies and procedures that prohibit a fire and rescue public safety employee from performing their duties while impaired by cannabis or (2) prohibiting use while on duty. If an employee reports for work while impaired by cannabis, the employer is required to report the incident to the State Emergency Medical Services Board.
- See State Government Article § 20–606(G) for more details.

What is a valid written certification?

- A written certification is issued by a certifying provider to a qualifying patient with whom the provider has a bona fide provider–patient relationship;
- A certifying provider may only issue a written certification to a patient who is registered with the MCA;
- A written certification includes a written statement certifying that, in the certifying provider's professional opinion, after having completed an assessment of the patient's medical history and current medical condition, the patient has an eligible condition for which the potential benefits of the medical use of cannabis would likely outweigh the health risks for the patient.
- See Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis Article § 36-101(kk), COMAR 14.17.01.01B(58) and 14.17.04.03A(1) for more details.

Are fire and rescue public safety employees who do not live in Maryland eligible to receive a written certification?

- Yes. Fire and rescue public safety employees employed in the state of Maryland, as outlined above, are eligible to receive written certification if they are registered with the MCA.
- MCA is establishing a process for fire and rescue public safety employees who live out-of-state to register as medical patients. This process is forthcoming.
- As MCA continues to develop this process, out-of-state employees who are interested in, and eligible to become certified medical cannabis patients may provide their information to MCA here. When MCA releases an out-of-state patient application, MCA will notify these employees who have expressed interest that the application is now live. Please continue to monitor your email for pertinent information from MCA to register as an out-of-state fire and rescue employee medical patient.

Does a fire and rescue public safety employee need to be a registered medical patient in Maryland to use cannabis and receive protection under State Government Article §20-606(G)?

- Yes. All eligible individuals must register with MCA as medical cannabis patients prior to receiving written certification from an MCA-registered certifying provider.
- MCA is establishing a registration process for fire and rescue public safety employees who live out-of-state to register as medical patients. This process is forthcoming.
- See State Government Article § 20–606(G) and COMAR 14.17.04.03A for more details.

Can a fire and rescue public safety employee use a written certification by a provider from out of state?

- No.
- A written certification must be issued by a Maryland-registered certifying provider.
- A certifying provider must be licensed with the MCA and is licensed and in good standing with their respective state health professional licensing board.
- See Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis Article §36-101(m) for more details.

Is there a list of certifying providers available?

- Yes. A list of certifying providers can be found on the MCA's Medical Cannabis Program Website.

Additional Questions?

- Current or potential patients – please call MCA during normal business hours at 410-487-8100 or 1-844-421-2571 or email mca.infoandregistration@maryland.gov.
- Fire and rescue safety personnel employers – please email questions to mca.policy@maryland.gov and the appropriate MCA staff will contact you.

V2 – October 14, 2026: this document is current with the MCA's guidance, regulation, and compliance efforts as of this date. The MCA reserves the ability to alter guidance to align the State's cannabis program with Maryland law and policy.