

# Cannabis Product Names and Branding Element Guidelines

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The Ontario Cannabis Store (OCS) believes in a transparent product call process. This resource is here to provide guidance to enable Licensed Producers to work effectively with the OCS.

These guidelines are intended to:

- provide high-level information about Health Canada’s promotion prohibitions contained in the Cannabis Act and Cannabis Regulations, which Producers are expected to comply with in order to sell cannabis in Canada; and
- outline the OCS’s product submission expectations for Producers with whom we do business, in alignment with our legislated mandate, corporate values and vision.

We take our legislated mandate seriously; we are committed to placing consumer interest at the forefront of our decision-making. To increase the likelihood of your submission being accepted for sale by the OCS, we advise suppliers to review these guidelines in detail when considering product names, descriptions and other brand elements.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

The OCS would like to do business with suppliers who:

- act ethically and with integrity;
- respect diversity and inclusion;
- share our focus on social responsibility; and
- share our vision to grow Canada’s largest and most vibrant cannabis marketplace.

To ensure that all cannabis products we make available to adult consumers align with our corporate values and vision, the OCS reviews all product submissions, including product names, descriptions and other brand elements.

We respect diversity and inclusion and expect our suppliers to do the same. As a result, we evaluate product names, descriptions and branding elements according to the Cannabis Act and Regulations, as well as our own criteria.



## COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Please refer to the Cannabis Act and Cannabis Regulations and seek independent legal advice for guidance in establishing cannabis product names and brand elements that reasonably comply with federal legislation.

As outlined in the Cannabis Act and Regulations, cannabis product names, descriptions and brand elements must:

- Not be appealing to young persons
- Not include testimonials or endorsements
- Not evoke a positive or negative emotion or image of a way of life, such as one that includes glamour, recreation, excitement, vitality, risk or daring
- Not reference or depict an identifiable person, character or animal, real or fictional
- Not include statements about unsubstantiated effects associated with product use
- Not include health or cosmetic benefits (e.g., pain relief, anti-anxiety)
- Not include false, misleading, or deceptive information that is likely to create an erroneous impression about the characteristics, effects and risks of the product
- Not include promotion about particular dietary requirements for an individual who a) has a physical or physiological condition or b) for whom a particular effect may be obtained (e.g., vegan, gluten-free)
- Not include promotion about the energy value or nutrient amount (e.g., zero-calorie)
- Not be associated with alcoholic beverages
- Not be associated with tobacco products
- Not promote illicit cannabis-related activities in a manner that may be seen as contravening the overarching purpose of the Cannabis Act

**If a submission does not meet these guidelines, it may be sent back and may impact your launch date. The OCS, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to remove elements that it determines may reasonably be perceived as contravening the Cannabis Act and Regulations.**

## COMPLIANCE WITH OCS CORPORATE VALUES AND VISION

Please ensure your product's name, description and associated elements meet the following criteria:

- Does not promote or glorify overconsumption
- Does not include trademarked names of third-party products and companies
- Does not promote in a manner that may be exploitative of vulnerable populations
- Does not include an insensitive appropriation of a culture, religion, deity, community, tradition, custom, icon and/or ritual
- Does not make reference to culturally significant artifacts, practices, beliefs, spiritual beliefs, articles of clothing and/or ceremonies or objects
- Does not make reference to forms of oppression, assimilation, stereotype and/or subordination
- Does not include elements that are offensive, racist, discriminatory, stigmatizing of specific groups of people, or a form of harassment
- Does not make use of cultural elements that are being used outside of their original cultural context
- Does not make reference to or glorify criminal activity or violence

Remember, be culturally intelligent and mindful of cultural differences. Respecting diversity and inclusion means respecting language, identity, ability, race and ethnicity, spirituality, and/or religious beliefs.

**If a submission does not align with the OCS's corporate values and vision, and/or contravenes any of the above statements, it may be sent back for revisions and may impact your launch date. The OCS, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to remove elements that it determines may reasonably be perceived as contravening the above guidelines.**