



## Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board

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**Topic:** Petition for Adoption, Amendment, or Repeal of a State Administrative Rule – Online age verification for cannabis retail licensee websites

**Date:** September 10, 2025

**Presented by:** Jeff Kildahl, Policy and Rules Coordinator

### **Background**

On July 23, 2025, the Liquor and Cannabis Board (Board) received a petition for rulemaking from Anil Bhagwat, a member of the public.

The rulemaking request made by this petition is for creation of a new rule section that would require cannabis retail licensees to ask all online customers to provide their official government issued identification, such as a driver's license or state identification card, when they register for an online account on the retail website. This request states that a new rule is needed to prevent minors from placing orders for cannabis on these websites.

### **Issue**

Whether the Board should create a new rule requiring cannabis retail licensees who also operate websites for their cannabis retail stores to verify the identity and age of customers who register on their websites by using government issued identification, and also requiring cannabis retail licensees to deny access to cannabis retail websites to persons under 21 years of age or persons who do not provide verified government-issued identification.

### **Statutes and Rules**

[RCW 69.50.357\(2\)](#) states that licensed cannabis retailers may not allow persons under 21 years of age to enter or remain on the premises of a retail cannabis outlet.

[RCW 69.50.4013\(5\)](#) states that no person under 21 years of age may possess cannabis, cannabis-infused products, or cannabis concentrates, regardless of THC concentration, except for qualifying patients with a valid authorization.

[WAC 314-55-080\(2\)](#) allows that qualifying medical cannabis patients between 18 and 21 years of age with a recognition card may enter and remain on the premises of a retail outlet holding a medical cannabis endorsement and may purchase products for their personal medical use.

[WAC 314-55-086\(1\)](#) states that all cannabis licensees, including retail licensees, must conspicuously post a notice provided by the board about persons under 21 years of age at each entry to all licensed premises that contains the following language: "Persons under 21 years of age not permitted on these premises."

[WAC 314-55-150](#) designates the acceptable forms of identification for age verification for purchasing cannabis at a licensed retail location.

## **Analysis**

Under [RCW 69.50.4013\(5\)](#), any person who possesses recreational cannabis in Washington must be at least 21 years of age, and the cannabis products in their possession must have been purchased in person at a licensed physical retail premises. For medical cannabis patients under the age of 21, [WAC 314-55-080\(2\)](#) states that qualifying medical cannabis patients between 18 and 21 years of age who hold a medical recognition card may enter a retail cannabis premises and may purchase products for their personal medical use.

Although cannabis retail licensees may only sell cannabis products at their licensed retail store locations, some retailers allow customers to pre-select their orders for convenience in online electronic “shopping carts” or electronic shopping apps. Customers who prefer to pre-order cannabis products this way are in fact reserving the products, but they must pay for the products and pick them up in person at a licensed retail cannabis store location.

When a potential customer approaches a cannabis retail store, the retailer is required under [RCW 69.50.357\(2\)](#) not to allow persons under twenty-one years of age to enter or remain on the premises of a retail outlet, and retailers must ensure employees are trained to identify persons under the age of twenty-one. In addition, [WAC 314-55-086\(1\)](#) states that all cannabis licensees, including retail licensees, must display a sign at the entrances that contains the following language: “Persons under 21 years of age not permitted on these premises.”

Because recreational cannabis purchases must be transacted in person by a person who is 21 years of age or older, there is no apparent advantage to preventing customers from pre-ordering or reserving products for their in-person purchase. Any person under the age of 21 who attempts to buy cannabis products by reserving the products on a website “shopping cart” or electronic app would, by definition, lack valid government-issued identification necessary to enter a licensed cannabis retail store and to purchase cannabis at the point of sale counter.

Information about cannabis products is widely available on the internet, and some cannabis retailers might voluntarily choose to ask customers to affirm that they are 21 years of age or over before allowing them to enter a website. However, current rules already prevent recreational cannabis purchases by minors by requiring valid government identification at the retail location.

## **Conclusion**

Persons under 21 years of age may not purchase recreational cannabis products, possess recreational cannabis, or enter a licensed cannabis retail premises in Washington. Because of these existing safeguards, online age verification for cannabis retail licensee websites would not prevent any minors from purchasing cannabis in Washington.

## **Recommendation**

For the reasons described above, Director's Office staff recommend that consistent with RCW 34.05.330, the Board deny the petition received from Anil Bhagwat submitted on July 23, 2025.

## **Board Action**

After considering the recommendation of Director's Office staff, the Board accepts/denies the petitions for rulemaking received from on July 23, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_ Accept \_\_\_\_\_ Deny

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Vollendroff, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Accept \_\_\_\_\_ Deny

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ollie Garrett, Board Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Accept \_\_\_\_\_ Deny

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pete Holmes, Board Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Attachments**

1. Petition from Anil Bhagwat



## PETITION FOR ADOPTION, AMENDMENT, OR REPEAL OF A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE RULE

Print Form

In accordance with [RCW 34.05.330](#), the Office of Financial Management (OFM) created this form for individuals or groups who wish to petition a state agency or institution of higher education to adopt, amend, or repeal an administrative rule. You may use this form to submit your request. You also may contact agencies using other formats, such as a letter or email.

The agency or institution will give full consideration to your petition and will respond to you within 60 days of receiving your petition. For more information on the rule petition process, see Chapter 82-05 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=82-05>.

### CONTACT INFORMATION *(please type or print)*

Petitioner's Name Anil Bhagwat  
Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
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### COMPLETING AND SENDING PETITION FORM

- Check all of the boxes that apply.
- Provide relevant examples.
- Include suggested language for a rule, if possible.
- Attach additional pages, if needed.
- Send your petition to the agency with authority to adopt or administer the rule. Here is a list of agencies and their rules coordinators: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/CodeReviser/Documents/RClist.htm>.

### INFORMATION ON RULE PETITION

Agency responsible for adopting or administering the rule: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ☒ 1. NEW RULE - I am requesting the agency to adopt a new rule.

Ask for a government provided ID (Driver's ID, State ID etc) while registering an account on cannabis provider website. Also, verify the validity of the ID.

☒ The subject (or purpose) of this rule is: \_\_\_\_\_

This is to make sure minors are not registering on the website and placing orders.

☒ The rule is needed because: \_\_\_\_\_

All individuals registering to open an account on cannabis retailer website. The request must be denied for a minor.

☒ The new rule would affect the following people or groups: \_\_\_\_\_