



The Dispensary Owner's **Complete Guide** to Live Video Monitoring



Deep
Sentinel

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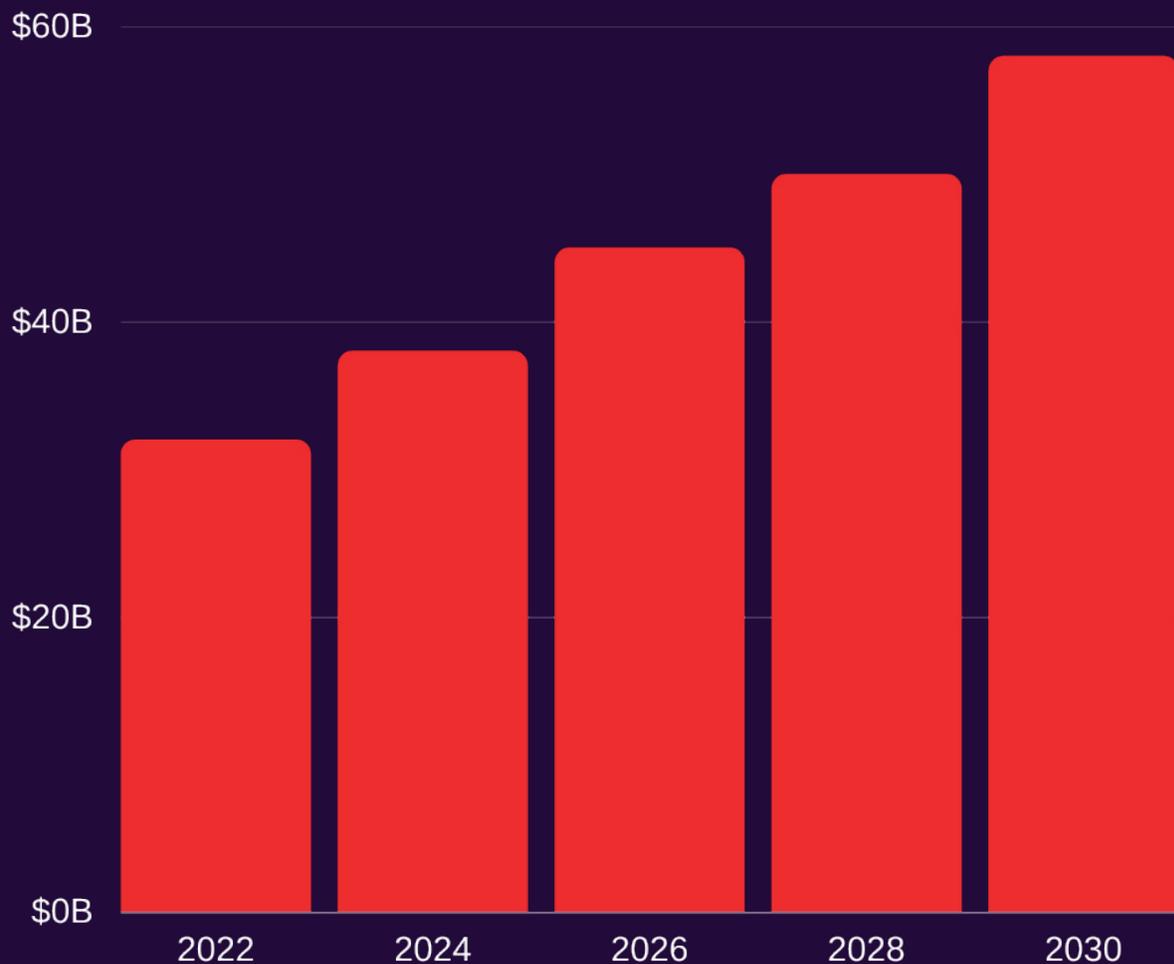
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I. The State of the US Dispensary Industry

39 states and the District of Columbia have legalized high-THC medical cannabis, and 22 of those (including DC) have legalized high-THC recreational marijuana as well.

As legalization spreads and more Americans shift their opinions to favor legalization, the legal cannabis industry continues to experience booming growth. [Total profits](#) for legal marijuana in 2022 hit around \$32 billion. The industry as a whole is projected to grow to \$58 billion by 2030, nearly doubling in the next 7 years.



But as the industry grows, so does the criminal threat to dispensaries, which are fast becoming a prime target for thieves.

There are several obvious factors that make dispensaries high-priority targets for crime.

First, dispensaries are mostly cash businesses. Cannabis is still a federally outlawed substance. This makes it more complicated for dispensaries to get an FDIC bank account. And even if they do get that business bank account, many customers still prefer paying cash at dispensaries to avoid leaving a paper trail.

Second, cannabis is a theft-friendly product. It's valuable and easy to resell on the secondary market. It's easy to conceal and get away with a large amount undetected. And unlike other kinds of products, it's pretty much untraceable.

For these reasons, to reduce crime, plenty of state governments and city and local municipalities have **put ordinances and codes in place requiring certain levels of security.**

They also want to limit the number of dispensaries, so there is an element of making owners and investors jump through a few hoops to get their business off the ground. Security requirements fit into this approach, along with licenses and location permits.

While those codes differ depending on your location, one thing is clear, dispensaries need a comprehensive security system in place, not only to protect their people, product, and profit, but to remain compliant with their local government.

In the next section, we further outline the common security requirements at the state level in areas where recreational use is legal.



II. Cannabis Security Requirement by State

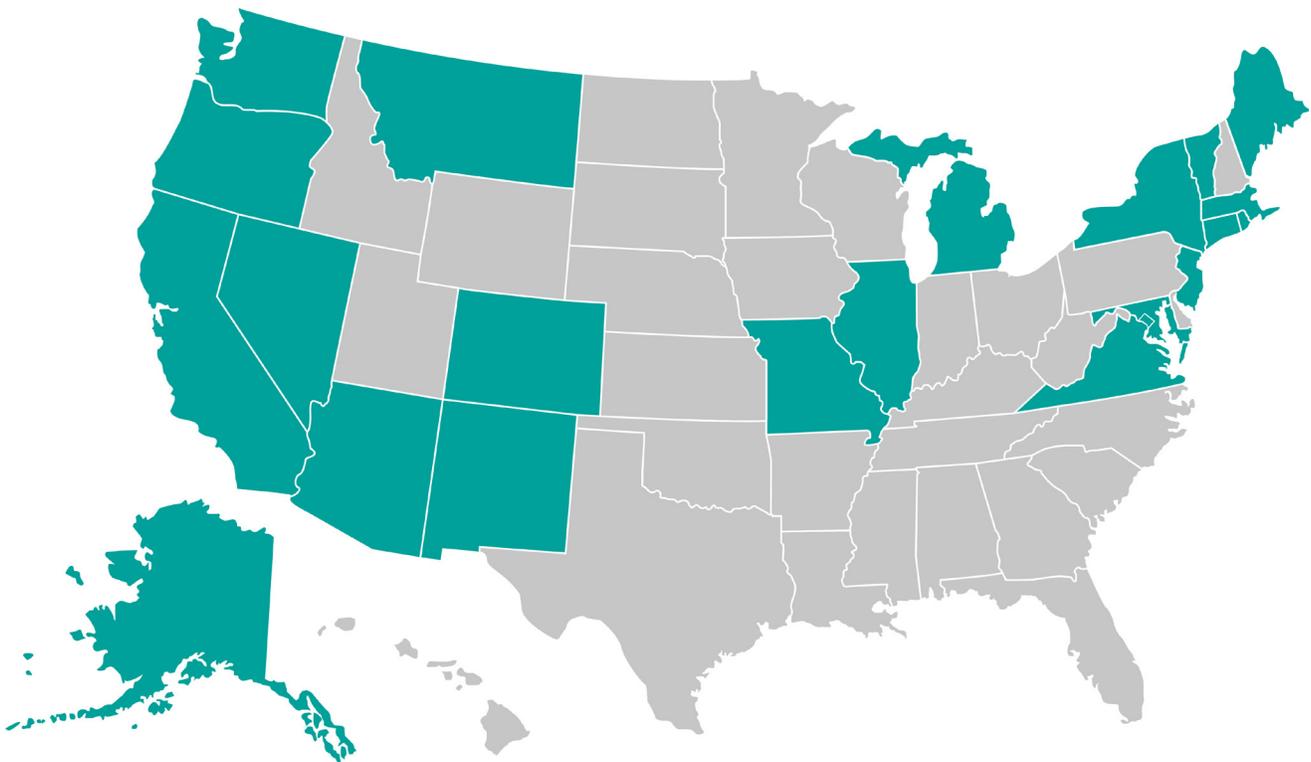
Each state has its own governing body in charge of setting operational requirements for legal dispensaries. Part of those requirements includes security codes.

Overall, these codes stipulate what areas of a dispensary or storage area must be under video surveillance, how long video must be stored, and the minimum camera resolution required.

For the sake of this guide, we aren't going to list all these security requirements state by state. But if you're wondering exactly what your state requires for dispensary security, we've taken the salient points from state codes and listed them out in a separate eBook linked here.

If you're looking to find your state's regulatory board to peruse the codes yourself or to get in touch with them to ask a question, we've listed them out below.

Click to View [Cannabis Policies](#) by State



Alaska: [Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office](#)
Arizona: [Arizona Department of Health Sciences \(ADHS\)](#)
California: [Department of Cannabis Control](#)
Colorado: [Marijuana Enforcement Division](#)
Connecticut: [The Department of Consumer Protection](#)
Illinois: [Department of Financial and Professional Regulation](#)
Maine: [Office of Cannabis Policy](#)
Maryland: [Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission](#)
Massachusetts: [Cannabis Control Commission](#)
Michigan: [Cannabis Regulatory Agency](#)
Missouri: [Department of Health and Senior Services](#)

Montana: [Cannabis Control Division](#)
Nevada: [Cannabis Compliance Board](#)
New Jersey: [Cannabis Regulatory Commission](#)
New Mexico: [Cannabis Control Division](#)
New York: [Office of Cannabis Management](#)
Oregon: [Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission](#)
Rhode Island: [Office of Cannabis Regulation](#)
Vermont: [Cannabis Control Board](#)
Virginia: [Cannabis Control Authority](#)
Washington: [Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board \(WSLCB\)](#)
District of Columbia: [Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration](#)



With these regulations in mind, let's dive into what security looks like for dispensaries.

For the benefit of new dispensaries or those in the early stages of a future planned opening, we have a section on in-store and on-hours security protocols that all dispensaries should be aware of.

If you've been in operation a while, feel free to skip that section to go straight to the [after-hours video monitoring solution](#).



III. On-Hours Security Protocols and Tips

Before we move onto after-hours security – some perspective.

If your dispensary lacks quality hiring practices and on-hours security protocols and does not have employee access controls in place, you will still experience theft, lost products, and lost profits.

After-hours security is obviously important, but it's not a catch-all solution. Many brick-and-mortar retail business best practices apply here, but here are some specific call-outs for dispensaries.

#1 Background Checks & Other Hiring Processes

Make sure you're following standard hiring best practices to attract the best talent.

Background checks help prevent you from hiring someone who is likely to steal product. Drug testing employees can also be beneficial for illegal substances other than cannabis.

If you need some tips on retail hiring best practices, which work well for the cannabis industry, [check out this industry blog](#).

#2. In-Store Cameras & Proper Access Control

To ensure employees aren't stealing product or cash, and to capture instances of shoplifting, interior cameras should be posted at every register and any inventory access point.

You should also make sure there are access controls in place for product and cash. That could be keycards, RFID, or keycodes. Only grant inventory and cash access to your most trusted employees.



#3. Documented SOPs

Standard operating procedures are never anyone's idea of fun. However, they're critical not only for ensuring your dispensary is well-run and profitable, but also that your product is not getting stolen.

Document SOPs for opening, closing, doing inventory, getting deliveries, and any other store process. And don't stop at creating the document. Train your employees so they do them correctly every time.

#4. Smart Scheduling

Schedule employee shifts so that nobody is ever alone at the store. This not only helps lessen the chance of employee theft but also ensures some safety in numbers should a break-in happen during operating hours.

#5. Don't Give Employees a Reason to Steal from You

This is plain and simple, and more about decency than protecting product and profits.

Pay fair wages and treat employees with respect, and they won't have a reason to steal from you.

Now that you're better equipped to ensure your dispensary's on-hours security, let's dive into after-hours security and why current solutions aren't entirely effective.



IV. After-Hours Security: How Current Dispensary Security Solutions Fall Short

Many dispensaries use some combination of guards, alarms, structural reinforcement, and perimeter barriers to build their security system.

While each one can be a helpful part of a dispensary's overall security plan, several factors make them impractical, unsustainable, or just plain ineffective for dispensaries.

The Obvious Problems with Traditional Security

Problem #1: Cost

When using traditional security methods, a good security plan will layer several methods at once for comprehensive coverage. That's great, but those costs add up quickly and can eat into profit margins.

Even amidst rapid growth in the cannabis industry, it's still important for dispensaries to save costs where possible. Pouring money into security solutions that aren't entirely effective is a waste.

Problem #2: Only Useful Once the Crime Is Happening

Many people gloss over the fact that "crime deterrence" and "crime prevention" are two different things.

Security solutions like alarms and reinforced doors are much better at crime deterrence. Sure, criminals may think twice about robbing a dispensary, knowing that their actions will be on camera. But they know they have some time to steal products and cash and make an escape before authorities show up.

Another way to phrase it – these solutions only work, in part, once a crime starts. Even though the system functions the way it's supposed to, a criminal can get away with a small amount of product and cause a large amount of property damage.

A better solution (one that we'll dig into in upcoming sections) would be one that can prevent thieves from even trying to break in – stopping them before they start.

Problem #3: False Alarms

Another problem with traditional security systems that dispensary owners deal with is false alarms.



Traditional motion alarms or outdated video motion detection can be easily triggered – by squirrels, a gust of wind, or nearby construction activity. False alarms are clearly a pain for owners. But it's not just the momentary interruption or residual anxiety.

False alarms can lead to delayed police response when an actual crime occurs. If your system pings local authorities too often with false alarms, your dispensary may gain a reputation. That reputation can lead to a slower response in the future when a real crime is unfolding.

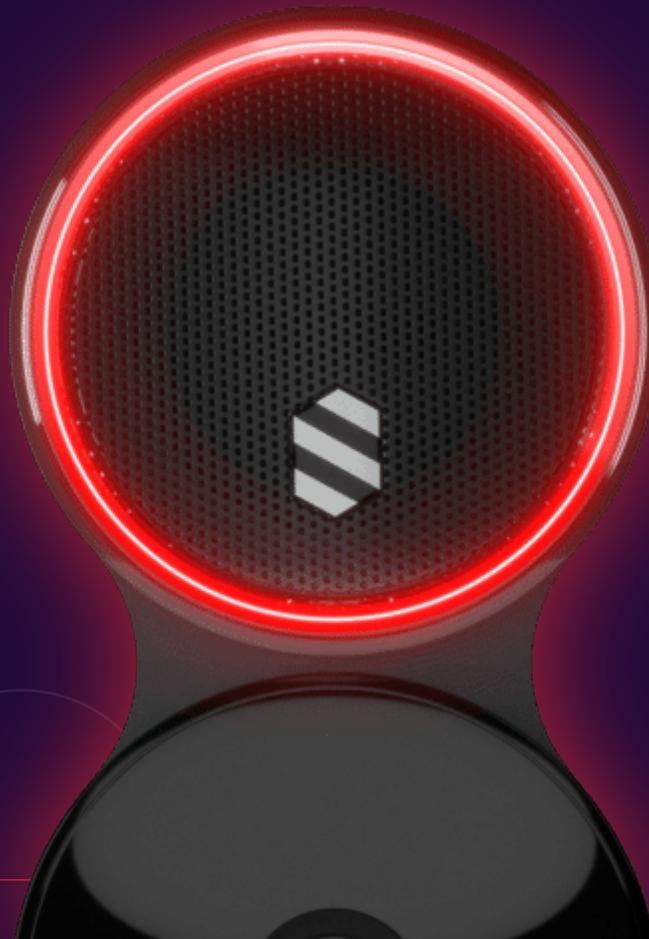
In addition to that, many cities have escalating fees for false alarms turning repeat offenses into recurring payments that hurt your dispensary's bottom line.

Problem #4: Space Constraints

Large vaults and secure back rooms are great, but many existing locations don't have room for them.

Dispensaries can be very small spaces, which means many dispensaries only use small safes to store product and cash. Those safes can easily be broken into, and traditional alarm methods can't provide the deterrence or time required to stop a theft.

Again, in this case, the best solution is crime prevention. The next section explores how new technology is making this possible.



V. The Solution: AI-Enabled Video Monitoring Technology

Crime deterrence isn't enough to protect dispensaries. What dispensaries need is an affordable, effective, and space-efficient crime prevention solution.

Newer video monitoring solutions are using AI-powered image analysis, two-way audio, and live guards to assess potential threats, engage actual intruders, and if necessary, alert local law enforcement – all in the ensuing seconds after a suspicious person is detected before committing a crime.

Here's how it works.

AI-Enabled Video Monitoring in Action

Here's how AI technology paired with trained, remote guards and two-way audio can help prevent crime before it starts.



0:00

0 Seconds - Smart Camera Detects Motion

Motion wakes the camera and it immediately starts to record. That video is sent over a secure private wireless signal to be analyzed.



0:02

2 Seconds - Artificial Intelligence Assesses the Situation

Artificial Intelligence separates potential threats like humans from useless events such as cars driving by.



0:10

10 Seconds - Guard Evaluation & Intervention

If the AI detects a threat, it sends the footage to a live guard. That guard assesses the threat and intervenes directly using the camera's 2-way audio or built-in siren.



0:30

30 Seconds - Law Enforcement Called

After intervening, that guard calls local law enforcement with a "verified" active situation, providing a description of the suspect and their behavior, prompting an immediate response from law enforcement because a real crime is occurring.



VI. Conclusion: Get Set Up with Proactive Video Monitoring

If you want to prevent crime at your dispensary, you need a proactive video monitoring solution.

Deep Sentinel can help you.

Deep Sentinel offers cutting-edge security cameras with unparalleled live monitoring, response times, and crime prevention. Our camera and video monitoring solutions meet or exceed your state and local security requirements.

They come with high-quality two-way audio, alarm sirens, night vision, and after-hours live surveillance. Using a proprietary combination of custom AI - to differentiate between potential threats and squirrels, delivery people, or passing pedestrians - and live security personnel, we provide real eyes on your dispensary in real-time whenever someone comes near your property.

Guards quickly assess the situation, intervene as necessary, and notify the authorities within 30 seconds if required.

Zero false alarms. Total cannabis security.

Want to get set up with your system? Here's what you need.

- + The ability to store video footage
- + A redundant power source in case of an outage
- + For Deep Sentinel, an on-site AI hub
- + For the PoE system, ethernet wiring
- + The ability to post cameras where needed along the perimeter of the building and at every entrance, register, and product storage location.

Interested in locking down your dispensary?

Get in touch with Deep Sentinel today.

Call 833.312.3057 to get quoted for your system.

