

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FIRE/PLANNING/BUILDING DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE GUIDELINE

Interpretation No: AG-01 Rev.1 (Shade and Hoop Structures)
Effective Date: 09/03/2019
Originally Issued: 12/06/95

Question

When are shade and hoop structures, either individually or collectively, subject to the greenhouse regulations?

Applicable Ordinance Section(s)

12.10.315(A)
13.10.650

INTERPRETATION

A shade or hoop structure is subject to the greenhouse regulations if it does not satisfy the criteria in Subsection 12.10.315(A)(11) , i.e., it must be, “less than 12 feet in height constructed of light frame materials and covered with shade cloth or clear, flexible plastic with no significant associated electrical, plumbing, or mechanical equipment, other than irrigation equipment.”

Reason

Unlike permanent greenhouses, these structures are often temporary, easy to erect and dismantle, and do not have any significant associated electrical, plumbing, or mechanical equipment. No significant electrical shall be defined as a single 15-amp branch with a single duplex ground fault circuit interrupter receptacle outlet, per hoop house. Any electrical work associated with a shade or hoop structure for this purpose must be permitted. Any electrical power utilized for supplemental lighting shall be limited to 1 watt per 20 square feet of canopy utilizing LED’s. This is the equivalent of 100 watts of power being utilized in a 2000 square foot hoop house. Supplemental lighting shall only be permissible within the Commercial Agricultural zone and within a 10-minute response time from a Fire Department. For sites outside of the Commercial Agricultural zone no electrical equipment may be utilized for supplemental lighting, fans or dehumidifiers.

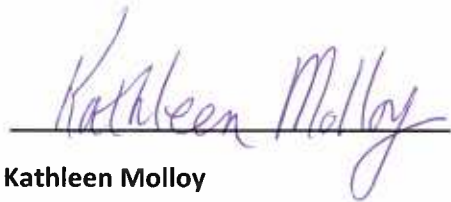
Shade or hoop structures are commonly used in cannabis cultivation projects within the County and due to restrictions associated with visibility and herbivory protection, shade and hoop structures can be fully enclosed with shade cloth or clear, flexible plastic. Enclosing a shade or hoop structure is not required for all cannabis cultivation operations but will be required for some to comply with SCCC section 7.128 (D)(1) and the Best Management and Operational Procedures requirements issued by the Cannabis Licensing Office.

SCCC section 12.10.315 (A) exempts “agricultural shade structures” from the requirement for a building permit if the structure is “less than 12 feet in height constructed of light frame materials and covered with shade cloth or clear, flexible plastic with no significant associated electrical, plumbing, or

mechanical equipment, other than irrigation equipment.” A shade or hoop structure must satisfy the criteria in section 12.10.315 (A) or it will be considered a greenhouse and subject to all applicable greenhouse regulations. **Note:** *shade and hoop structures not subject to the greenhouse regulations are still structures and as such are subject to all applicable non-greenhouse site regulations, coastal zone regulations, and environmental protection regulations contained in the Zoning Ordinance.*

Definition of Fire Department Fire Station: A 24-hour, 365-day full time staffed department fire station with full time permanent employees (not volunteer and not a seasonal Fire Station) equipped to respond to a full range of emergencies.

This policy only applies within the Santa Cruz County Fire jurisdiction (CSA 48) and within the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathleen Molloy". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Kathleen Molloy

Planning Director