



CASE STUDY: HIGH-YIELD CANNABIS GROW FACILITY

San Francisco Bay Area

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Time-tested tradition, new applications

For more than 45 years, Spacesaver has been helping businesses, libraries, and other institutions save space while keeping materials organized and protected. Now Spacesaver's innovative technology is being used by indoor growers in the cannabis cultivation industry.

One example of a recent installation is this cannabis grow facility located in the San Francisco Bay Area. Staff are using Spacesaver's ActivRAC® Mobilized Storage System to gain significantly higher yields in their existing rooms, without having to build expensive additions or construct a new facility.



THE PROBLEM: Expensive space

Space is at a premium in the Bay Area, which is one of the most expensive real estate markets in the U.S. Even warehouse space in industrial areas is expensive.

Beyond real estate costs, cannabis growers need to control the temperature and humidity throughout the grow areas. The larger the facility, the greater the expense.

With these concerns in mind, the owners of this facility were determined to make every square inch count. Although it might seem appealing to pack as many plants as possible into the flowering rooms, the owners knew that wasn't a viable option. That's because crowded plants inhibit air movement, which can result in the growth of mold, mildew, and other pests. Also, all the plants' leaves need access to light for maximum productivity, and this is impossible to achieve when the leaves of some plants are shading others.

They also knew that the plants need to be carefully tended, and employees would need to be able to reach every part of every plant. They wanted tables to be around four feet wide to allow staff to comfortably reach the plants without straining, and the aisles between the tables needed to be wide enough to accommodate staff and their bins and tools.



Before Spacesaver ActivRAC®



After Spacesaver ActivRAC®

THE SMART SOLUTION: ActivRAC® Mobilized Storage System

The company's owners worked with their local Spacesaver consultant to design a new solution using ActivRAC. The ActivRAC system was originally designed for heavy-duty industrial applications, and it consists of shelving or pallet racking mounted on "carriages" that move along rails installed into or on top of the floor.

Trellises and netting help keep the plants from sprawling into the aisles, where they might get bumped or broken.

This facility grows taller strains on the bottom rows of the ActivRAC system and smaller strains on the upper level.

Staff use mechanical-assist handles to open aisles wherever they're needed.



“Our goal is to maximize our space – and we’ve been able to do it with Spacesaver’s help.”

-General Manager, Cannabis Grow Facility

The aisles are wide enough to allow multiple employees to work on both sides of the rows.

Proper spacing allows all the plants to get adequate exposure to light, which encourages bud formation.





THE RESULTS: Maximum Efficiency

OPTIMIZING SPACE

The local Spacesaver consultant designed an ActivRAC system specifically for this facility. The rows are 42 feet long, and staff are able to move the rows effortlessly with mechanical-assist handles.

HIGHER YIELDS

Because the Spacesaver system is so strong, it's able to support two levels of plants, lights, fans, and irrigation systems, enabling the facility to nearly double its yields.

A STRONG, RELIABLE SYSTEM

Spacesaver's experience with industrial clients has resulted in a robust, reliable system that has already been proven to stand the test of time. For decades, ActivRAC systems have been moving heavy loads over long spans on military bases and in industrial warehouses throughout North America.

A PHASED APPROACH

The ActivRAC system was initially installed in a single room at the facility, and the increased productivity in that room justified the need for new ActivRAC systems in additional rooms. In each case the local Spacesaver distributor worked with staff to minimize disruption and downtime, timing the new system installation to coincide with the end of each room's harvest.

ERGONOMICS

The new set-up features four-foot-wide tables that make it easy for employees to reach every plant. Aisles can be opened where they're needed, and aisle widths can be adjusted. For instance, one person working with a large bin can open up a single wide aisle, while teams of people working simultaneously on both sides of a table can create narrower aisles on each side.

CODE COMPLIANCE

Because large-scale cannabis cultivation is still a relatively new concept, many communities are still developing local building regulations, but Spacesaver's team has decades of experience in working with general contractors, architects, and local officials to ensure that shelving systems are in compliance with all applicable codes.

What's next?

The ActivRAC systems have increased capacity in the flowering rooms so much that now staff need more space in other areas to keep up. The general manager is encouraging the business owners to purchase additional ActivRAC systems for the veg room and curing room. That's because an additional system in the veg room/propagation room will help the facility produce enough cuttings to maintain full capacity in the flowering rooms, and an ActivRAC in the curing room will help ensure that the drying plants are adequately ventilated while still enabling staff to assess the plants during the curing process.

“We went from 10 long 'tables' to 18, and now we have way more aisle space. That keeps the employees safe and happy.”

-General Manager, Cannabis Grow Facility



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