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Date: March 31, 2015

To: All LCLB staff  
All LDB staff  
All Local Government, First Nations, and Police Agencies

Re: **Special Occasion Licence policy changes & online implementation**

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The purpose of this policy directive is to announce amendments to the Special Occasion Licence Program.

## Background

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As a result of recommendations from the Liquor Policy Review, the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch is moving the Special Occasion Licence application and approvals process online.

Beginning April 7, 2015 the online application process will be introduced gradually in geographically-assigned phases. During the transition period both paper and online applications will be accepted. At the conclusion of the implementation period all applications will be processed online.

A number of policies are being amended to support the online transformation and to improve consistency. This directive describes the application process, implementation timeframes, approval requirements, and policy changes.

These changes will improve customer service, reduce the administrative burden on families, charities and community groups, and allow the Branch to focus its monitoring efforts on public safety issues and effective licensing of events.

## Statutory Authority and Policy Rationale

Government has approved regulations setting out changes to the Liquor Control and Licensing Act and Regulation. This regulation repeals the definition of 'store manager' in the Liquor Control and Licensing Act and brings into force sections 3, 4 (a) to (f), 5, 17(b), 26 and 31 (f) and (l) of the *Liquor Control and Licensing Amendment Act, 2014*. The Act is available at [https://www.leg.bc.ca/40th2nd/1st\\_read/gov15-1.htm](https://www.leg.bc.ca/40th2nd/1st_read/gov15-1.htm).

Several sections of the regulation have been amended. The new sections of the regulations are available on the [LCLB website](#). These legislative and regulatory changes clarify the role of local governments and First Nations in approving events, clarify record keeping and production requirements for licence holders and allow holders of public special occasion licences to advertise.

## Policy

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### **The Online Application and Approval Process**

Beginning April 7, 2015, SOL applications will be submitted online at <https://solo.bcldb.com>.

Applicants will create a user account to apply for family events or as representatives of a group or organization for other events. Applicants will answer a series of eligibility, operational and liquor service questions and will submit the application once it is complete. Events with more than 500 patrons in the licensed area(s) must provide a security plan prior to submitting an application.

Applications will be screened based on risk criteria. Applications that do not require further review and approval by the Branch or police will be automatically approved. Applications that require review will be forwarded to liquor inspectors, licensing staff or police based on the number of people attending, hours of the event and whether the licence requested requires a policy exemption.

Police will determine what events they wish to review, based on the number of patrons attending and whether an event is family, public or private in nature. Size parameters will be set based on a police department or detachment's coverage area, which may include various individual municipalities.

Liquor inspectors will review and approve any application with 500 or more patrons attending in the licensed area. This will include a security plan review and approval, which may be done in consultation with local police, Committees for Approval of Public Events (CAPE committees) or other public safety agencies.

There is no separate SOL Policy Exemption application or fee for online applications.

Branch licensing staff will continue to review applications for the following exemptions:

- Application by a non-Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
- Application for more than 3 events per month or 24 events per year per applicant.
- Application for late hours (after 10:00pm for outdoor events and 2:00am for indoor events).
- Application for a price exemption for charitable purposes or wine pricing for cost recovery.
- Eligibility for a reduced licence fee for limited hours of liquor service.

Once approved, the applicant will pay the licence fee and prepay applicable PST on liquor revenues. Once payment is accepted a licence will be issued.

Applications received by the Branch with at least 14 days' notice will generally be accepted and reviewed with sufficient time to respond prior to the event. More complex security plan and exemption applications may require additional time. Applicants remain responsible for providing police and the Branch with sufficient notice to review and approve online applications.

## **Approval requirements**

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### **Local governments / First Nations**

Local government or First Nations will no longer provide approval for all public SOLs as part of the licence application process.

Events on local government or First Nation lands or premises will continue to require municipal or First Nation approval. Applicants who fail to obtain required approvals may have their licence cancelled on the request of a municipality, First Nation or local police. Local governments and First Nations may continue to place limits or conditions on liquor sales through bylaws that control the sale or service of liquor.

Local governments and First Nations are encouraged to continue to participate in organizing and approval committees for community events and may request that the Branch or police place conditions on those events.

### **Police**

Police may place conditions on a licence, similar to the previous practice on the paper SOL Application Form. Failure by the Licensee to comply with police conditions may result in suspension or cancellation of a licence but may not result in enforcement action by LCLB.

### **LCLB**

Liquor Inspectors and Branch licensing staff will review and approve applications and may place terms and conditions on a licence. Failure by the Licensee to comply with these terms and conditions could result in monetary penalties or the suspension or cancellation of the licence.

## **New Policies**

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### **Frequency**

The General Manager limits the frequency and location of events to ensure that licences are used for special or infrequent events. Each separate day at each licensed location is considered one event.

Effective April 7, all applicants are limited to three (3) events per month, and up to 24 per year without a policy exemption.

Applicants will continue to pay a separate licence fee for each individual day, per location.

The Branch may limit the number of licences issued to an applicant when licences are used frequently or for events that are routine and not temporary in or infrequent in nature.

### **Maximum Liquor Price Schedule**

Effective April 7, 2015 the maximum price for wine is amended to \$7.00 per 5 ounce

servings. Different serving sizes or bottle prices must be pro-rated to the maximum price amount.

Applicants for Family, Private and Public events may apply to charge more than \$7.00 per serving for wine if required for cost recovery purposes. The online application system will request additional information from the applicant, including the product type and reasons for charging a higher purchase price. This request will be reviewed by licensing staff.

The current price schedule for beer, ciders/coolers and spirits is unchanged.

### **Events at Multiple Dates and Locations**

An applicant may submit a single online application for an event that consists of multiple licensed locations at different addresses within the same municipality or First Nation. Fees will be calculated based on a per day, per location basis.

Applications for events with multiple locations in different municipalities or First Nations lands will have to submit additional applications for licensed locations in each respective municipality or First Nation lands.

### **Record keeping and production requirements**

Effective immediately, all licensees are required to keep the following documents on site during the event and provide them to liquor inspectors or police upon request:

- The Special Occasion Licence,
- A copy of the licence application and any records submitted with the licence application,
- Any written permission required for events on municipal or First Nations lands or premises, and
- Records of the liquor purchased for sale or service under the Special Occasion Licence.

### **Advertisement for Public Events**

Effective immediately, public events are permitted to advertise to the general public, and may include the availability of liquor in those advertisements.

Third parties that advertise or promote a public event may advertise that the event is licensed or that liquor is available, and may include the types of liquor and prices.

Advertisements must comply with section 57 (4) of the Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, including:

- Compliance with the *Code for Broadcast Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages* published by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
- References to liquor products are limited to products that are listed or otherwise approved for sale by the Liquor Distribution Branch; and
- Depiction of packaging or labelling is limited to products that have been approved by the Liquor Distribution Branch.

Advertisements must also comply with any terms and conditions for Special Occasion Licences.

The prohibition on liquor advertising remains in effect for private and family events.

## **Implementation**

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Transition to the online application process will be done in three stages. At the start of each stage all BC Liquor Stores in that area will no longer provide paper application forms to customers. Applicants will be directed to the online website and can purchase their liquor in-store prior to obtaining a licence. Paper application forms will no longer be accepted after May 20, 2015.

Applicants that cannot access the internet from home may access the online application website from any publicly accessible computer with internet access. Additional points of service at ServiceBC Centres are planned and will be introduced between April 7 and June 15, 2015.

The SOLO implementation dates and regions are:

April 7 – 19	Vancouver Island and Northern BC
April 20 – May 3	Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley
May 4 – May 17	Southern Interior

The Branch will make every attempt to facilitate application reviews and approvals during the transition period. However, applicants will remain responsible to apply with adequate notice for approval, particularly if Branch or police review is required.

## **Further Information**

The online application, including general help, contact information and user account setup is available at [www.solo.bcladb.com](http://www.solo.bcladb.com). Support for the online application is available toll free at 1-855-999-7656.

General information, detailed policy manuals and further information regarding Special Occasion Licences are available on the Branch website at <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/liquor-regulation-licensing>

If you have any other questions regarding these changes, please contact the Branch toll free in Canada at 1-866-209-2111 or 250-952-5787 if calling from the Victoria area.

*Original signed by:*

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