

# Rural Licensee Retail Store Terms and Conditions



July 2021



# Update Summary

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# Rural Licensee Retail Store Terms and Conditions

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# Introduction

The Rural Licensee Retail Store (RLRS) licence authorizes a general store to sell packaged liquor (beer, wine, coolers, cider and spirits) to patrons in the service area under the licence and to sell or serve samples of liquor in the service area to patrons.

Rural Agency Stores (RAS) authorized under the *Liquor Distribution Act* to sell liquor on behalf of the Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB) may have had their RAS authorization converted to an RLRS licence, having met liquor licensing requirements under the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*.

This handbook outlines the requirements of the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation and terms and conditions that relate to the operation of RLRSs. RLRS licensees are responsible for ensuring they operate in compliance with these rules.

Throughout this handbook the term “general manager” refers to the general manager under the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, who has legislative authority to make decisions regarding liquor licensing in British Columbia. Licensees must follow B.C.’s liquor laws and these terms and conditions at all times as well as any further terms and conditions that may be imposed by the general manager under the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*. Licensees are also responsible for knowing and complying with any applicable federal, local government and/or Indigenous Nation laws, bylaws and requirements.

Licence terms and conditions change from time to time. Stay up to date by referring to this Rural Licensee Retail Store Terms and Conditions handbook online and regularly checking for changes to policy on our [policy directives webpage](#).

## Contact Information

If you have any concerns or questions about your licence, please contact your local liquor inspector or the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) at:

### Mailing Address

PO Box 9292 Stn Prov Govt,  
Victoria, BC V8W 9J8

### Head Office Address

400 – 645 Tye  
Victoria, BC V9A 6X5

### E-mail

[LCRBLiquorPolicy@gov.bc.ca](mailto:LCRBLiquorPolicy@gov.bc.ca)

### Phone

250-952-5787 in Victoria

### Toll Free Phone

1-866-209-2111

## Website

Find helpful information along with licensee handbooks and links to the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* and Regulations at <https://www.gov.bc.ca/lcrb>

# Providing Safe and Responsible Service

## Serving It Right™: B.C.'s Responsible Beverage Service Program

Serving It Right is a self-study course that provides training for licensees, managers and servers about their legal responsibilities when serving liquor and provides effective techniques to prevent and address problems related to over-service.

Serving It Right must be completed by all licensees, managers (staff who supervise the sale or service of liquor) and sales staff (staff who sell or serve liquor). For licensees, the following table shows who is required to complete Serving It Right.

Type of Licensee	Who Needs Serving It Right
Private or public corporation	Authorized signing officer of the corporation
Local government or Indigenous Nation	A person you identify as your representative
General partnership	At least one partner
Limited partnership	The general partner
Sole proprietor	The sole proprietor
Trust	Trustee
Non-profit corporation (e.g. a society)	Director or senior manager

Serving it Right training requirements are applicable to employees in the licensee's store, depending on whether they are involved in the sale or service of liquor or the supervision of the sale or service of liquor. The following table clarifies who is required to complete Serving it Right certification.

Role	Activity	Minimum Age	SIR Certificate Required? (Y/N)
Cashier	Processing customer liquor sales (including bagging) Taking customer product returns	19	Yes
Receiver/Stocker	Receiving liquor orders in storage room Stocking shelves in liquor section Assembling liquor orders for pick up (excluding bagging) Tidying up shelves	N/A	No
Empties/ Recycling	Staff refunding deposits for recycled liquor containers	N/A	No
Store Clerk	Answering customer liquor questions Making liquor product recommendations to customers Conducting liquor sampling	19	Yes
Manager	Supervises sale and service of liquor	19	Yes

Staff processing telephone or online customer orders including liquor products and overseeing the pick-up of liquor orders must be 19 years of age and have Serving it Right certification. If the phone or online order is to be delivered, the delivery person is not required to obtain certification, but must be 19 years of age and is still required to check identification and ensure that no liquor is delivered to minors or intoxicated customers (see Delivery section of this handbook for more information).

The Serving It Right course packages, exams, and certificate numbers can be found online at [www.responsible-servicebc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.responsible-servicebc.gov.bc.ca).

The licensee is responsible for ensuring employees successfully complete the Serving It Right program. The licensee must keep records for at least six years that show the name of each employee, the number of the employee's certificate of completion for the Serving It Right program and the expiry date. If an employee has successfully completed a liquor service training program offered by another province, the licensee must include in its records the name of the program and province and, if the certificate of completion for the program shows an expiry date, that date. The licensee must produce these records to a liquor inspector or peace officer upon request.

Staff relocating to British Columbia with a valid certificate showing completion of a liquor service training program offered in another Canadian jurisdiction are exempt from the Serving It Right requirement until the expiry of their existing certification.

## Display of Social Responsibility Materials

You are required to display at least one social responsibility poster or tent card provided by the LCRB. The materials will be mailed to you and must be displayed in a prominent location of the licensed service area. New materials will be provided to you at regular intervals, free of charge. Additional copies are available from your local liquor inspector or on the branch website.

## Controlling Your Store

The general manager may suspend all or part of a RLRS licence for up to 24 hours in the following circumstances:

- If the conduct of patrons or employees is of a riotous, violent, drunken or disorderly nature or
- If the safety of one or more persons in the establishment is threatened. **(48(1) Liquor Control and Licensing Act (LCLA)**

The general manager also has authority to suspend all or part of a licence or impose terms and conditions on a licence

- For up to 24 hours, if the general manager is of the opinion it is in the public interest to do so, or
- For a period up to 14 days, if the general manager has reasonable grounds to believe that it is in the public interest to do so as a result of extraordinary circumstances associated with the operation of the establishment. **(s. 48(2) LCLA)**

If the general manager takes action in one of the above described circumstances, the general manager may order

- Immediate removal of the patrons and/or employees from all or part of the establishment and/or
- Closure of all or part of the establishment.

If the general manager makes an order for removal of persons from or closure of all or part of the establishment, the licensee must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the establishment or part of it, is immediately vacated. **(48(3) LCLA)**

## Preventing Disturbances

RLRS licensees and their staff must take reasonable measures to prevent disturbances inside and outside of their business. This means performing actions that are appropriate in the circumstances and within your capacity to

do. Examples of reasonable measures include:

- Developing and implementing policies and procedures;
- Installing adequate lighting outside the store and in the parking lot;
- Ensuring the store parking areas are supervised; and/or
- Posting signs asking customers not to disturb store neighbours.

## Intoxicated Customers

A licensee or an employee must not

- Sell or serve liquor to an intoxicated person or a person showing signs of intoxication,
- Allow a person in a service area to become intoxicated; or
- Allow an intoxicated person to enter or remain in a service area.

If a licensee or their employee believes a person is intoxicated, they may either request that the person leave a service area or forbid the person from entering a service area.

A person must not

- Remain in a service area in an establishment after the person is requested to leave or
- Enter a service area or an establishment within 24 hours after the time the person was requested to leave.

If a person refuses to leave or enters within 24 hours after a request to leave was made, notify police as that person is committing an offence.

You must record all incidents of intoxicated customers in your store and the action you took in an incident log and have the information available for the liquor inspector or peace officers (see Liquor Register).

Additionally, please note that, with the exception of consumer tastings, you must not permit alcohol consumption in your store (see section re: Samples section below).

## Minors

Unaccompanied minors (those under the age of 19) are allowed in RLRs and may be employed in these stores. However, minors cannot purchase liquor or be involved in the sale of liquor. For more information on the duties minors may perform in your store, please see the Serving It Right section of this handbook, which provides full information on the age and training requirements for store employees.

A licensee must not sell liquor to minors. A licensee and their staff must be proactive about meeting this requirement.

## Identification (ID) Requirements

If there is any doubt whether a customer is 19 years old or older, you and your employees should verify age by asking for two pieces of ID, carefully examining both pieces, and acting on the authenticity of the identification. It is an offence to serve or sell liquor to a minor. If it cannot be demonstrated that identification has been checked, the person who served or sold liquor to a minor may be charged and convicted of an offence.

## Primary ID

Primary ID must be either the person's passport, driver's licence (that displays the person's photograph and date of birth) or identification card issued by a government agency (that displays the person's photograph and date of birth).



Examples of primary ID include:

- State or provincial driver's licence
- Passport
- The Photo BC Services Card
- Citizenship card
- First Nations status card
- The Federal Firearms Possession and Acquisition licence

Note that the BC Driver's Licence and Services Card, which combines the BC Driver's Licence and Services cards (formerly CareCard), counts as only one piece of ID.

## Secondary ID

Used to verify the authenticity of the first piece, the secondary piece of ID:

- Must include the holder's name; and
- Must include either the holder's signature OR picture.

Any acceptable piece of primary ID can be used as secondary ID. Examples of other acceptable secondary ID include:

- The Non-Photo BC Services Card
- Interim driver's licence (issued by ICBC)
- BC Transit ProPASS
- University or college student card
- Credit card
- Canadian Blood Services donor card
- Transport Canada's Pleasure Craft Operator's Card
- Many bank cards and rewards cards
- National Defence ID

You can accept expired and foreign ID, as long as it is readable, and you can recognize the customer from the picture.

You and your staff must decide on a case-by-case basis if the ID presented proves that the person is not a minor. If the person cannot produce two pieces of acceptable identification, you should refuse service. You must cooperate with a liquor inspector if asked to determine whether a person is a minor.

# Your Liquor Licence

## Availability of your Licence and Floor Plans

You must post your liquor licence in a prominent location in the service area of your store. Your store's floor plans and a list of any offsite liquor storage locations must also be immediately accessible for an inspector or police to see, but these documents do not need to be posted.

The LCRB will send you a hard copy of your liquor licence in the first year. Afterwards, your liquor licence will be available for download through the [online licensing portal](#).

## Renewing Your Licence

You must renew your liquor licence before the licence expiry date each year and pay an annual licence fee. The fee is calculated based on the amount of liquor you purchased from the Liquor Distribution Branch during the 12-month period ending six months before your licence expiry date. For more information, please visit the [LCRB website](#).

Please note: the licence renewal fee must be paid each year, regardless of any other applications (for example, transfer of ownership) that may be in progress at the time.

## Making Changes to Your Licence

The licensee must advise the LCRB of any changes that alter the information relevant to the licence, or of a change in circumstance related to their licence.

Some changes require the LCRB's prior approval, while others require the licensee to report the change within 10 days. Failure to provide this information is a contravention of the RLRS licence and subject to penalty. Below is a table of changes that need prior approval and those that require reporting. These are in addition to any items that are addressed elsewhere in this handbook.

Type of Change	How to Report	Liquor and Cannabis Licensing Portal	When Approval Required
Transfer of Location	Application	Yes	Before relocation occurs
Structural Alteration*	Application	Yes	Before structural change occurs
Permanent Change to Liquor Licence: Establishment/business or licence name change Request for change in terms and conditions Change to hours of sale	Application	Yes	Before permanent change to liquor licence occurs
Permanent Change to Licensee: Change of directors or officers (corporation, society) Name change of licensee Addition of receiver or trustee Addition of executor or administrator	Application	Yes	Within 10 days of permanent change to licensee occurring
Third-Party Operator (add, change)	Application	Yes	Before third-party operator begins operating

Third-Party Operator (remove)	Letter	Yes	Before third-party operator is removed
Transfer of Ownership (including sale of liquor business and its assets)	Application	Yes	Within 10 days of the sale

Type of Change	How to Report		When Approval Required
Share Transfers or Changes Internal transfer of shares** External transfer of shares Amalgamation of corporate licensee, holding company or subsidiary	Application	Yes	Within 10 days of share transfers or changes
Loss of Valid Interest Licensee no longer owns and runs establishment Licensee does not have certificate of title or lease for establishment location	Letter	No	Within 10 days of loss of interest
Tied House Association with a manufacturer or agent based on common ownership, an immediate family member or a third-party operator	Letter, if not submitting an application in relation to the tied house	No	Before tied-house association occurs
Tied House Exemption (add/remove)	Application	Yes	At any time where a tied house has been identified
Convictions (applicable to any individual licensee, or partner, shareholder, director, or officer of the licensee) Criminal Code offence Alcohol-related offence under Motor Vehicle Act or similar legislation elsewhere (in or outside of Canada)	Letter	No	Within 10 days of conviction and confirmation at renewal
Court Action Involving Disposition of Liquor Licence	Letter	No	Within 10 days of notice received
Offsite storage of liquor (begin storing liquor offsite, change location of storage, or stop storing liquor offsite)	Form	Yes	Within 10 days
Dormancy***	Form	Yes	Within 10 days of dormancy occurring

### \*Structural Change

If you are making changes to the current approved service area, other than cosmetic changes, a structural alteration application is required. Some examples of structural alterations that require approval include, but are not limited to:

- Physical expansion;
- A change in the position of access and exit points leading to or from a service area; and
- A change in the position of a wall, floor or ceiling surrounding a service area.

RLRS licensees do not need approval for cosmetic changes such as flooring, countertops and painting.

## \*\*Internal Transfer of Shares

A licensee must report an internal transfer of shares respecting the licence or the licensee, other than:

- The removal of shareholders; or
- The redemption or dissolution of shares.

Unless:

- The licence has been identified as having an association with another licence (a tied house); or
- The removal of the shareholder or redemption or dissolution of shares results in any of the remaining shareholders moving from owning less than 10% of voting shares to owning 10% or more of voting shares in the licensee.

## \*\*\*Dormancy

If you are planning to close your store for an extended period of time, for example for extensive renovations, you must report this closure to the LCRB and you must also notify the LCRB when you plan to restart regular operations (this notification requirement does not apply to seasonal closures).

All licences are permitted to be dormant for a period of up to two years. If your establishment is dormant because of extensive renovations caused by a fire, flood or other event beyond your control you may apply for an extension to dormant status. If you cannot provide evidence of the incident and your efforts to rebuild, your licence will be cancelled after two years.

## Selling your Business

If you are selling your business and wish to transfer your liquor licence to a new owner, the new owner must apply to transfer your licence to their name using the [Transfer of Liquor Licence Application form](#). If a new owner is acquiring your business by buying some or all of the shares in your company, you must submit the [Application for Permanent Change to a Licensee form](#).

## Providing Information to the LCRB

As required under LCLR section 80(2), a licensee must keep the following records, as applicable, for a period of at least six years from the date the records were created.

- Liquor purchase records (see Liquor Register below);
- Liquor sales records (including sales to approved Hospitality licensees and Special Event Permittees), including quantity of liquor sold and prices charged;
- Liquor disposal records (see Liquor Register below);
- Sales records for all non-liquor related items and services;
- Contracts with other licensees;
- Invoices and purchase receipts for all equipment and other inventory that is used in the operation of the establishment;
- Management contracts and leases that are related to the establishment;
- Records of incidents, such as fights or other disturbances and accidents, that adversely affect customers or staff, people who live or work in buildings adjacent to the establishment or event site and the operation of the establishment or event site (see Liquor Register below);
- Records of court orders and judgments against a licensee respecting the sale, service or manufacture of liquor; and
- Employee records including names, addresses, salaries, primary job responsibilities, shift schedules and

dates of employment.

Some record types may not be relevant to your individual business. If you have questions your liquor inspector can provide details and guidance regarding types of records required to be kept. The requirement to keep necessary records begins the day your licence is issued.

## Liquor Register

A liquor register is comprised of three types of records that you will need to keep in your establishment, available for inspection at all times:

- all your liquor purchase records (i.e. receipts and invoices) for your liquor inventory, including any liquor transfers. A liquor inspector or police officer may look at your register and compare it to your stock to make sure you have purchased your liquor lawfully. If an inspector is unable to verify that the liquor on your premises was purchased lawfully, the liquor may be seized.
- Liquor disposal records accounting for any liquor that was lost/disposed of due to spoilage and breakage. This can be done by either keeping a written record in a log-book or by making a notation on the original receipt or invoice.
- An incident log tracking fights, other disturbances or accidents adversely affecting customers or staff, people who live or work in buildings adjacent to the establishment or event site and the operation of the establishment or event site.

Liquor registers may be hardcopy or digital. Best practices for keeping a liquor register include:

- Keep all your receipts and invoices for liquor purchases in chronological order and separate from receipts and invoices for non-liquor purchases.
- Photocopy or scan receipts printed on thermal paper to protect the record from fading over time.

# Your Store

## Independent Ownership

It is a requirement of an RLRS licence that the general store in which the rural licensee retail store is located is, in the opinion of the general manager, independently owned. This is an ongoing requirement of your licence. When the general manager is considering whether a general store is “independently owned”, they may consider relevant factors that include the following:

- Whether the applicant business is locally owned and operated.
- The legal and beneficial owner of the general store.
- Whether the applicant is a franchisee or otherwise affiliated with another business.
- Whether the general store appears to be associated with a grocery store chain.
- Whether the general store sells products that are only available to franchisees or affiliates of a larger business.
- Whether any appearance of association with another business is in relation to the additional services the general store offers (e.g., Canada Post).

## Associations with Other Businesses

You may be associated with another rural licensee retail store. Associations with other businesses are not permitted.

If you are associated with another rural licensee retail store, you may engage in joint advertising and promotions. Joint advertising and promotions are not permitted with other businesses.

The general manager may impose terms and conditions on your licence regarding advertising and signs used in relation to your establishment (see Signs for additional information).

## Floor Plans/Separation Requirements

The licensee is responsible for determining their product display area and the tasting area, if tastings are offered. The product display area does not need to be bounded and may encompass a variety of shelf configurations, such as a small corner of the store, a kiosk, multiple shelves on one or both sides of an aisle, etc. as long as the following conditions are met:

- Liquor products are not intermingled with other goods. All liquor products to which the public has access are in a distinct display area within the rural licensee retail store; and
- Liquor is not sold outside of liquor service hours, even if the rural licensee retail store is still open for regular business (see Hours of Sale).

The licensee may move the product display area within the rural licensee retail store without notifying the LCRB, as long as it continues to meet the above-noted conditions. One tasting area is permitted. It must be immediately adjacent to the product display area and must be defined by a physical barrier (e.g. ropes and stanchions) when in use as a tasting area.

## Buying Liquor

You must purchase your liquor directly from the Liquor Distribution Branch warehouse, from a designated Liquor Distribution Branch retail store, or another source authorized in writing by the general manager of the Liquor

Distribution Branch.

It is a serious contravention to buy liquor from an unauthorized source or to purchase liquor that is not recorded against your licence number.

The exception to the above is that you may occasionally transfer a small amount of liquor to another rural licensee retail store to balance stock if products run out unexpectedly. You cannot transfer or receive more than \$10,000 a year of liquor in this manner and both the seller and the purchaser must keep records within the liquor register indicating what quantity, brand and type (sku #) of liquor was transferred, its value, date of transfer, and the licence number of both seller and buyer.

## Unlawful or Private Liquor

RLRS licensees may not buy, keep, sell or give unlawful liquor to anyone. Unlawful liquor is defined as:

- Liquor obtained from an unauthorized source;
- Liquor not purchased under your licence;
- Stolen liquor or smuggled liquor;
- Liquor intended for export;
- Homemade or UBrew/UVin (Ferment-on-Premises) liquor;
- Liquor purchased as a medicinal, confectionery or culinary product that is being used as beverage alcohol;
- Liquor that has been adulterated; and
- Samples left behind by a manufacturer or an agent.

You are accountable for any unlawful liquor found anywhere on your premises. Private liquor owned by you or an employee or liquor you received as a gift, cannot be kept in your store or liquor storage area.

If you recently purchased your establishment and acquired your licence through a transfer, you must conduct a thorough audit of all liquor on the premises to ensure none is unlawful.

## Storing Liquor

Your liquor stock must be stored at your establishment or at an offsite storage area if you have notified the LCRB of the offsite storage location. Offsite storage areas must be located in British Columbia and may not be located in a residence. You must advise the LCRB if an offsite storage area is no longer being used.

If you store liquor for more than one licence in a common liquor storage area, the liquor that was purchased under each licence must be clearly identifiable.

You must keep a list of storage areas with the liquor licence and produce it upon request by liquor inspector or police.

## Selling Liquor

In addition to products you regularly stock, you may accept special orders from customers and sell non-stocked wholesale products.

Revised  
July 2021

## Who You Can Sell To

You are only permitted to sell to retail customers and to special event permit holders. You are also permitted to sell to other licensees, if authorized by the general manager. Exceptions granted by the general manager will be noted as a term and condition on the face of your licence. If you are authorized to sell to specific Food Primary and/or Liquor Primary licensees, you are required to report those sales to the Liquor Distribution Branch.

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June 2021

## Hours of Sale

You may sell liquor at your store between the hours of 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., or as indicated on your licence. Note that local governments or Indigenous Nations for the area in which your store is located may further restrict operating hours.

If your store operates outside of these hours, you are required to have policies in place to ensure liquor sales are conducted only within the hours they are permitted.

## Pricing

You must not sell liquor at a price lower than **either** of the following prices:

- The price you paid to purchase the liquor; and
- The price set out in the table below

Liquor Category	Minimum Price Per Litre (not including all sales taxes)
Wine	\$6.44
Spirits	\$27.88
Liqueurs	\$20.39
Packaged Beer (bottles and tins)	\$3.19
Draught Beer (kegs 18L or greater)	\$1.97
Cider and Coolers	\$3.75

You may be interested in using an [interactive Excel spreadsheet](#) available on our website that allows you to enter different product sizes to determine the minimum price.

You may adjust your prices at any time throughout the day, but the price must never go below the minimum



price as outlined above.

## Promoting Cannabis

It is the responsibility of all licensees and permittees to be aware of and comply with all federal and provincial laws in respect of the promotion and advertising of cannabis, cannabis accessories and services related to cannabis.

The federal *Cannabis Act* has strict rules in respect of the promotion of cannabis, cannabis accessories and services related to cannabis. In particular, the *Cannabis Act* restricts the types of promotions that are permitted in a place where young persons may be or are permitted.

Further, the *Cannabis Control and Licensing Act* regulates who is authorized to promote cannabis for the purpose of selling it. Persons authorized to promote cannabis for the purpose of selling cannabis under the Act include persons who hold a marketing licence or a retail store licence under that Act.

## Loyalty Programs

You may offer reward, loyalty or other incentive programs to customers purchasing liquor. These programs may be structured as points systems, a progressive scale of discounts, the awarding of gifts at predetermined purchasing thresholds, etc. You must ensure that the value of any loyalty points earned from liquor purchases do not amount to a discount that would reduce the retail price of the liquor below the minimum price.

For example, you purchase a bottle of wine from the Liquor Distribution Branch for \$7. Your loyalty program stipulates that 100 points = \$1. If you sell the bottle of wine for \$8, then you cannot offer more than 100 points for the purchase of this bottle of wine, because 100 points equals \$1 and means the customer effectively received the bottle for \$7.

Customers can redeem loyalty points to purchase liquor as long as the value of the loyalty points redeemed plus any money paid by the customer meets or exceeds the minimum price as defined above (i.e. is not lower than either the price the licensee paid to purchase the liquor or the minimum pricing specified in the table above).

Loyalty points can also be redeemed for gift cards that can be used towards purchasing liquor as long as the amount paid by the customer through the gift card meets or exceeds the minimum price as defined above.

## Liquor Sales Location (including online sales)

All of your business activities related directly or indirectly to the sale of liquor must be conducted inside your store. The only exception is that you may advertise your business in accordance with the "Advertising Your Business" section of this handbook.

You may sell your liquor products to the public from your store, your online store or from an online website that is clearly identified with your store. You may share a website with other licensees if the following conditions are met:

- The website design clearly indicates which store (including the location) the customer is ordering from;
- Each store manages its own sales; and
- Each store's liquor licence number is posted in a prominent place on the website.

You may advertise on a website owned and operated by an unlicensed third-party, as long as the website serves

as a “portal” with links that direct customers to either:

- Websites independently owned and operated by RLRS licensees where the sales are processed; or
- Space on the third-party website that is equivalent to an RLRS licensee’s own website.

Space on a third-party website is equivalent to an RLRS licensee’s own website when the following conditions are met:

- The RLRS licensee’s store name, licence number and store address are displayed prominently on the page;
- The RLRS licensee has exclusive control over the product selection and the price being advertised;
- The product selection is reflective of the RLRS licensee’s in-store offerings; and
- Liquor orders made on the website are processed and prepared by the RLRS licensee.

RLRS licensees who deliver must deliver their products to customers from their store. The online store, whether on the licensee website or on a third-party platform, is considered an extension of the store, so deliveries cannot be made from a registered offsite secondary storage site. (See the “Delivery” section of this handbook for more information.)

## Drive-throughs

No drive-through liquor sales are permitted.

## Consumer Tastings

You and one or two liquor manufacturers or agents may agree to conduct tastings of products that are available for sale in your store. You may have a maximum of two manufacturers or agents conducting consumer tastings in your store at any one time.

If you have a manufacturer or agent providing the samples, they may bring in their own samples of products they make or sell and that are carried in your store for the tasting but must provide the samples free of charge. If you conduct the consumer tasting yourself, you may sell the samples.

Maximum sample quantities per customer:	
Beer	175 ml
Wine	75 ml
Spirits	20 ml

This amount can be divided as you choose. For example, if you present three kinds of wine, you may offer a maximum quantity of 25 ml of each wine to taste.

- The tasting area must be immediately adjacent to the product display area and must be defined by a physical barrier (e.g. ropes and stanchions).
- When a consumer tasting event will take place, and how long it will run, is up to you and the manufacturer or agent. However, all tasting must end 30 minutes before liquor sales must end as indicated on your licence. You and the liquor manufacturer or agent may advertise the tasting within or outside the store, using promotional materials supplied by the liquor manufacturer or agent.
- You may not charge the manufacturer or agent a rental fee for demonstration space.
- Anyone serving samples must be Serving It Right certified and familiar with the rules governing consumer tastings at liquor stores. Servers may not leave open containers unattended.

- Customers must consume samples in your store; they may not take samples away to consume offsite. If the manufacturer or agent purchases liquor from you for the tasting, you must issue (and the liquor manufacturer or agent must retain) a countersigned receipt for the dollar value of sampled product.
- At the end of the consumer tasting conducted by a liquor manufacturer with an onsite store, the manufacturer may take away any unfinished bottles.

You may serve food samples that complement a particular alcoholic beverage. You can install kitchen equipment to accommodate these events, and you may charge an attendance fee. However, neither the food ingredients nor the final product may be offered for sale, the focus of your business must not shift to that of a restaurant or food store, and you must obtain approval from the local Environmental Health Officer before installing kitchen equipment and serving food samples.

## Liquor Delivery

Stores may deliver liquor to customers using their own employees or a third-party service under the following terms and conditions. These Terms and Conditions do not apply to non-liquor products sold at your store.

Liquor can only be delivered to:

- A place where liquor can legally be possessed or consumed;
- Individuals 19 years of age or older (for information on verifying age, see the "ID Requirements" section of this handbook); and
- Individuals who are not intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.

In addition:

- You may deliver products ordered online from your store, but you may not make deliveries directly from your offsite storage facility, if you have one.
- Your charge for the liquor must be your regular retail price of the liquor plus a separate delivery charge, if any. You must inform customers of both charges when they place an order.
- You may deliver no earlier than 9 a.m. and no later than one half hour after the hours permitted for liquor sales. Note that local governments and/or Indigenous Nations for the area may place further restrictions on delivery.
- You must keep delivery transaction records for at least six years. These must include the date, time and address of each delivery, the products purchased, the prices charged, delivery fees and total amount paid.
- You must not take orders for liquor or arrange for payment and delivery of liquor outside of your store.
- You or your staff must process and prepare the order to be delivered by you, your staff or a third-party delivery service.
- You are responsible for making sure that anyone delivering for you follows these terms and conditions, including a person working for a third party service who is not your employee. As the licensee you will be held accountable for any contravention that takes place while liquor is delivered from your store.

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## Games and Entertainment

Games and entertainment related to the sale of liquor are not permitted in your store; however, you may sell toys, games and other types of entertainment as part of the general store business. You may hold contests, either on your own or with a liquor manufacturer, but you cannot offer liquor as a prize. See the section ["Relations with Liquor Manufacturers and Agents"](#) for more details.

# Advertising Your Business

All of your advertising must comply with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's Code for Broadcast Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages and *Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*.

## What You May Advertise

You may advertise information about your store, including your name, location, hours of sale, non-liquor products you are permitted to sell, and liquor products you sell that have been approved for sale by the Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB), as well as their prices. You may not advertise liquor for free or at prices below the minimum price requirements. Your advertising may not depict packaging or labelling unless that labelling has been approved by LDB.

## Signs

The name of your business and exterior signage must be approved by the LCRB. All business names and signage must comply with the advertising terms and conditions and not mislead the public as to the class of liquor licence you hold or who owns the business. Your signs must also comply with local government bylaws.

Note: Stores that previously held a Rural Agency Store authorization must ensure they no longer appear to be associated with the BC Liquor Distribution Branch.

## Internet Group Discounts

Third-party companies offering internet group discounts are not licensed to sell liquor and may not legally include liquor as part of a joint promotion with your store. You may not participate in internet discount promotions that include liquor

# Relations with Manufacturers and Agents

There are strict rules that govern how you can work with liquor manufacturers and liquor agents to promote their products. For more information regarding agents and their role read the definition in the Glossary section of this handbook or refer to the agent terms and conditions.

Agents may hire employees to promote and market the manufacturer's liquor products that the agent is authorized to represent. The agent must also provide their employees with identification establishing them as the agent's marketing representative.

## Activities Not Permitted: Inducements

The Act prohibits you from asking for or receiving benefits for selling a particular liquor product. You cannot, for example, demand that a manufacturer or agent supply additional product at either no cost or at a reduced cost in return for purchasing their product.

You may accept information and ideas to help improve your business, but this information must come directly from the manufacturer or agent, and not through an outside consultant. You cannot accept advice about borrowing money or locating financing.

You are also prohibited from accepting any items, products or services from a manufacturer or agent that are necessary for the operation of your business. This includes financial assistance as well as fixtures, furnishings, or permanent display structures.

In addition:

- Manufacturers cannot buy shelf space, offer volume discounts, or offer discounted product in exchange for marketing benefits.
- You must always pay for your own advertising. A liquor manufacturer or agent cannot pay all or a portion of your advertising costs (or vice versa), nor are you permitted to have a joint marketing plan. With permission from a manufacturer or agent, you can include the manufacturer's logo in your ads, but you cannot demand or receive any kind of compensation in return.
- You must carry and make available to consumers a representative selection of products from a variety of suppliers that are not associated with or connected with each other.

## Activities Permitted with Approval: Tied houses

A tied house is a business that has any association, connection or financial interest with a liquor manufacturer or its agent that is likely to lead to its products being favoured. A tied house relationship may exist in circumstances that include:

- You have any amount of ownership interest in a manufacturer/agent licence (for example, a shareholder in your company also holds shares in a business that holds a winery licence); or
- Your proposed third-party operator has any amount of ownership interest in a manufacturer/agent licence; or
- You have an immediate family member with any amount of ownership interest in a manufacturer/agent licence. Immediate family members include spouses, parents, siblings and children only.

If these circumstances exist, you are considered to be in a tied house relationship with a manufacturer and you

are prohibited from carrying or selling that manufacturer's product in your store.

There are two circumstances under which this prohibition does not apply (commonly known as tied house exemptions):

- If you are owned by a manufacturer and located at that manufacturer's site or elsewhere, you may carry and sell that manufacturer's product with no restrictions. In this case you aren't required to carry the products of any other manufacturer but may choose to do so.
- If you are in a tied house relationship with a small or medium-volume manufacturer but are located elsewhere, you may apply to the LCRB to allow you to carry and sell that manufacturer's products.

The number of exemptions you may apply for is not restricted, but the manufacturer may only have ties with up to three offsite licensed establishments and must agree to this arrangement during the application process. If approved, you may sell that manufacturer's products but must also sell products from other manufacturers in that product category.

The inducement restrictions do not apply to a licensee and manufacturer where a tied house exemption has been approved.

## Activities Permitted

### Promotional items

You may accept promotional items of nominal value, such as posters, from a liquor manufacturer or agent, as long as it does not appear that you are promoting a particular liquor product or the products of a particular manufacturer (brand- identified or corporately-identified items of a particular liquor manufacturer must not predominate).

You may buy clothing and novelties – such as shirts, caps, key chains, etc. – with the name or brand of a particular liquor or liquor manufacturer at fair market value and re-sell them to your customers or employees. These items may display the name of your rural licensee retail store.

A liquor manufacturer or agent may loan you more expensive promotional items with the manufacturer's name or brand, such as signs or mirrors. The manufacturer may also loan you temporary display structures and related promotional items (all displays and promotional items remain the property of the manufacturer).

You may also accept T-shirts, hats and other promotional clothing items with a manufacturer's name or brand on them to give away to your customers. You cannot take any promotional items for personal use or future promotions, and you cannot sell them.

### Liquor Supplier Branded Refrigerators

Liquor suppliers may provide you with brand-identified refrigerators for use within your liquor store under the following conditions:

- Ownership of the refrigerator is retained by the liquor supplier;
- The liquor supplier does not pay for any installation or maintenance costs;
- The liquor supplier cannot provide more than two refrigerators to any one liquor store;
- You cannot have more than four liquor supplier-provided refrigerators in your liquorstore; and
- Any refrigerator provided by a liquor supplier cannot be more than 19 cubic feet.

## Value-added Promotional Items

If a manufacturer or agent has received approval from the Liquor Distribution Branch to offer value-added promotional items in B.C. government liquor stores, he or she may also provide those same promotional items to your store for the same promotion period.

You may accept value-added promotional items from a manufacturer/agent that they are not supplying to government liquor stores, provided you follow the rules set out in the Liquor Distribution Branch guidelines and provided the items do not contain liquor. Under these guidelines, value-added promotional items must be of nominal value (they cannot exceed 20% of the retail price of the base product) and must be liquor (only if approved for government liquor stores) or liquor-related or branded.

Items may include:

- "On-packs," where a small bottle of liquor or an item such as a corkscrew is attached to a bottle or case;
- "In-packs," where an item, such as a T-shirt, is included inside a case; and
- "Near-packs," where an item, such as a bag of chips with a manufacturer's brand, is placed near or alongside a product and is given away whenever that product is purchased.

Value-added promotions may also include third-party coupons attached to a liquor product by a neck tag or back label or placed inside a case. These coupons cannot be for a rebate or reduction on the purchase price of liquor, for a free liquor product of any kind, or for cash.

You may keep any leftover items at the end of the promotional period and continue to offer them to your customers until they are gone; however, you cannot take any promotional items for personal use or future promotions.

Promotional items are not transferable. You may not transfer items to another licensee or to another establishment, even if you own it.

You and the manufacturer or agent may advertise these promotions.

## Product Samples

As a way of introducing their products, a manufacturer or agent may give you product samples, but the amount you receive must not be more than one bottle of the smallest available size per product in any one year (must not exceed two litres). You must keep a record of all samples received in your liquor registry, including the date, name of the manufacturer or agent, name of the product and volume of the product. Only you and your staff may consume this liquor in a private place outside the licensed area. It is not intended for your customers and must be served to them.

## Contests

If a liquor manufacturer or agent is running a contest in government liquor stores, they may also hold that same contest in your store for the same period and with the same promotional materials on display.

You may hold contests in conjunction with a liquor manufacturer or agent that are not running concurrently in government liquor stores, as long as the manufacturer/agent follows the Liquor Distribution Branch guidelines

outlined in their booklet.

If you agree to hold a contest in your store, the liquor manufacturer or agent must conduct the contest and install all promotional items. The manufacturer or agent must remove all promotional items within 10 days after the contest has ended. The manufacturer/agent must also record the name of anyone who wins a prize valued at more than \$100.

You may include contest entry forms in your print ads, and you may mention where entry forms are available in any of your advertising.

## Product Vouchers

You may enter into an agreement with a liquor manufacturer or agent to honour their product vouchers (i.e. certificates for a specific quantity of liquor that customers can redeem at participating rural licensee retail stores at no charge).

Only the manufacturer or agent may distribute vouchers.

Once a voucher is redeemed, the liquor manufacturer or agent must pay you the full retail price for the quantity of liquor specified on the voucher. You cannot ask for or receive an additional "redemption fee" for accepting a product voucher. Size limits for product vouchers are the same as those for product samples.

## Sponsorships

Manufacturers and agents cannot sponsor events or activities at your liquor store.

You may sponsor events, activities, or organizations using your corporate name or the name of your licensed establishment. The sponsored event may be held offsite at an unlicensed venue or catered event. You can sponsor minors' events, activities, and organizations but must not advertise alcohol.

## Educational Events and Activities

You may attend educational events or activities, such as a "wine school," hosted by a liquor manufacturer or agent.

You may accept payment from the liquor manufacturer or agent for legitimate travel, meals, accommodation and entertainment expenses associated with the educational event, up to \$1,500 per licensee location per year. If you have multiple licensed establishments – a chain of liquor stores, for example – you may also accept expenses of \$1,500 per person to a maximum of \$4,500 per head office per year.

## Hospitality

A liquor manufacturer or agent may pay for your hospitality expenses not associated with an educational event at a rate of up to \$1,000 per licensee location per year.



# Compliance and Enforcement

As a licensee, you are required to:

- Comply with the Liquor Control and Licensing Act, its Regulations and the terms and conditions in this publication;
- Always allow LCRB inspectors and/or police officers to enter your establishment. Never impede their entry in any way;
- Upon request, provide inspectors with any documents and/or records as outlined in this handbook; and
- Never draw attention to inspectors inside your establishment. This can affect the inspectors' safety.

Drawing the attention of customers to the fact that inspectors, minor agents contracted to the LCRB, and/or police are present in your establishment may put the safety of the inspectors, minor agents contracted to the LCRB and police at risk.

Accordingly, your actions must not cause the attention or focus of customers to shift towards inspectors, minor agents contracted to the LCRB, or police at any time, including at the time of entry, during an inspection or when exiting your establishment.

Actions such as announcing the arrival of inspectors, raising or flashing lights, turning down music, playing particular soundtracks (e.g. "Bad Boys" or "Hawaii Five O"), using spotlights or any other similar actions are not permitted. You may not take, save or distribute photographs or video of inspectors or minor agents contracted to the LCRB in any manner (e.g. on a staff bulletin board, print media, social media or the internet).

If your licence is suspended, you are not permitted to sell, serve or permit consumption of liquor in your establishment.

For more information, please visit [Liquor and non-medical cannabis compliance and enforcement](#).

# Glossary

**“The Act”** means *The Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, the provincial legislation that guides the licensing of establishments that manufacture, store or sell liquor in B.C.

**“Agent”** refers to a liquor manufacturer representing itself as an agent, a person hired by a liquor manufacturer to represent them as an agent, or a person who holds an agent’s licence who represents a manufacturer of liquor outside of British Columbia.

**“Licensee”** refers to any individual, individuals or corporate body that holds a British Columbia liquor licence. The term covers both the licensee of record and any person acting in the place of the licensee, such as a manager, an authorized representative designated by the licensee, or person in charge of an establishment in the licensee’s absence.

**“Rural licensee retail store”** or **“liquor store”** means an establishment that is permitted to sell all types of packaged liquor.

**“Manufacturer”** means a manufacturer of liquor products (beer, wine, spirits, cider, coolers) or the corporate official of a liquor manufacturer.

**“Marketing representative”** refers to a person hired by a licensed agent to promote their products.

**“Third-party operator”** refers to an individual or corporation contracted by the licensee to operate the establishment on a day-to-day basis.

