



Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch

**Special Event Permit
Manual**

January 2019

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Section 1: Overview

Legislative authority for issuing special event permits

Special event permits (SEPs) are regulated by the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB).

- Section 30 of the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* creates the authority for the general manager to issue permits
- Section 110 of the regulation establishes special event permits as a class of permits.

Why British Columbia regulates special events at which liquor is served or sold

The province of British Columbia regulates these special events to ensure:

- Permittees are aware of their duties and responsibilities;
- Liquor served is from a lawful source;
- Enforcement authorities are aware of the event; and
- Events meet all legislative requirements for serving liquor.

SEP rules and regulations apply throughout British Columbia, including lands or premises owned or operated by a local government, first nation, provincial, or federal government.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 30\(3\)\(a\)](#)]

Purpose of a SEP

A SEP allows an individual, organization or business to occasionally host a special event at which liquor is served or sold.

Typical SEP events include family gatherings, private functions, community festivals and manufacturer tastings. SEPs differ from permanent liquor licences because they are available to those who wish to provide occasional liquor service. For example, a weekly curling competition does not qualify because it is a regular event, but an annual tournament does because it occurs only once a year.

When a SEP is required

Any individual, organization or business planning to sell or serve liquor in any location that is not a private residence, private place, or licensed establishment is required to apply for a SEP online.

Note: “Selling” liquor includes direct and indirect charges for the liquor (such as including a quantity of liquor in an admission to the event).

There are many instances in which a SEP is required for an event, including:

- A manufacturer’s tasting event;
- A social, cultural, recreational, religious, sporting or community event;
- A beer or wine judging competition; and
- A mass invitation customer appreciation event.

There are three types of SEP events: private special events for invited guests and ticket-holders, private family events, and public special events.

Private special events for invited guests and ticket holders

A private special event is an event in which attendance is limited to invited guests, members and staff of an organization, or persons who have bought or received advance tickets. Tickets at these events cannot be sold at the door.

Private family special events

A private family event is attended by family and friends only; it is closed to the public and hosted by a family member or friend to celebrate an aspect of family life. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Religious events;
- Birthdays;
- Weddings;
- Anniversaries;
- Retirements; and
- Memorials.

Public special events

A public special event is an event in which anyone may attend, either by obtaining a ticket at the door or by entering the event location.

Public special events held on local government or first nation land need written permission from the applicable local government or first nation *and* local police authority, specifically:

- If the event is held on a reserve as defined in the *Indian Act*, the SEP applicant is required to obtain support for the event from the band council for the reserve **and** the police authority having jurisdiction over the reserve;
- If the event is held in an area under the jurisdiction of an aboriginal governing body other than a band council, the applicant is required to obtain support for the event from the aboriginal governing body **and** the police authority having jurisdiction over that area; and
- If the event is held in any other part of the province, the applicant is required to obtain support for the event from the applicable local government **and** the police authority having jurisdiction over the area.

Local police consider the location, nature, and duration of the proposed special event and the proposed quantity of liquor in relation to the number of adults and minors attending the event, and may:

- Support the event;
- Cancel the SEP application; or
- Suggest to the LCRB that additional terms and conditions be imposed.

Note: An event for which tickets are sold is not necessarily a public event; in order for an event to be considered public, tickets must be available to the public at the door.

Generally, both private and public special events may be held in a location that is already licensed—such as a restaurant, bar or pub—provided the existing liquor licence is temporarily suspended. A special event may also take place in an unlicensed location, such as a public park or community hall.

A SEP may be issued to the hosting individual or group for a special event held on a cruise ship or charter vessel, such as a luncheon, dinner cruise or seasonal celebration cruise, if the vessel is not otherwise licensed.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 111](#) and [115](#)]

When a SEP is *not* required

Events in a private residence

Events in private residences do not require a SEP because police and government officials are unable to inspect these venues.

The host of a private residential event may purchase liquor from a licensed caterer, but the liquor may only be served free of charge to guests. Licensed caterers cannot sell drinks directly to the patrons of a residential event (only hosted bars are permitted).

Private residences include:

- Private dwellings – either the entire building, or part of it, such as the backyard;
- Private guest rooms;
- Private vacation dwellings in which private rooms are open to the public, such as a bed and breakfast—in this case, the area that is considered residential is limited to the room and does not include other areas of the building or the land adjoining it; and
- The common room in a condominium or strata complex.

Please note: If a house and its surrounding property are rented out as an event venue, it would not, in most cases, qualify as a residence. A building must be used solely as a private dwelling, private guest room or private vacation dwelling to meet the definition of a residence. A building that is used for events or other business purposes, such as a bed and breakfast, does not exist solely for private use; however, any occupied bedrooms would be considered private residences.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 1](#)]

A “**residential event**” refers to an invitation-only event, such as a dinner party or wedding, held at a residence in which liquor is sold by a licensed caterer.

Events in a private place

A private place includes a building or part of it during a period in which the public does not have access to it. This includes venues that are generally open to the public, such as theatres or libraries, which may choose to close to the public to host a private invitation-only event. However, a building or part of it that is rented out by the public, such as a banquet hall, is not considered a private place.

Guests may bring their own liquor to events held at a private place. If liquor is sold, a SEP is required, and guests must not bring their own liquor.

A SEP is not required for events in a private place if liquor is served and meets the following criteria:

- The event occurs in the office space normally occupied by the business or agency hosting the event;
- The area used for the event is not open to the public;
- The nature and size of the event is such that it will not draw the attention of the public through excessive noise or other disturbances;

- Members of the public cannot enter;
- Attendance is by prior invitation only;
- The special event is attended only by the employer, employees and their guests (or board members, staff and their guests, if the office is not a business); or
- There is no entry or entertainment fee, nor are fees charged that are related to the service of liquor (e.g. fees for drink mix, ice or glasses).

A SEP is also not required when the following are used as a permanent or temporary private dwelling in a campsite (an area where camping is allowed, together with any adjacent land that is used for the convenience, occupation and enjoyment of the occupants):

- A motor home or other motor vehicle that is not on a highway;
- A camper or trailer that is not on a highway; or
- A tent.

A SEP is similarly not required on a private vessel—to which the public does not have access—that has permanent sleeping accommodations, cooking facilities and a toilet.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 73\(1\)\(b\)](#), Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 4](#)]

Events hosted by foreign governments or on international waters do not require a SEP if they meet the following conditions:

1. The event is held in a place controlled by an embassy or consulate of a country recognized by the Government of Canada.
2. The event is held on an ocean-going ship engaged in international trade or a Canadian or foreign warship while in a harbour or in Canadian territorial waters and the liquor used comes from the ship's stores.

[Statutory Orders and Regulations 96/40, Ships' Stores Regulations, Justice Laws Website, <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-96-40/page-1.html>]

Section 2: Applicant Eligibility

Minimum eligibility requirements

The minimum age for a SEP applicant is 19. The applicant is required to be the person who will host the special event, a member of the organization hosting the special event, or the owner or employee of a business or agency hosting the special event.

All applicants are required to have Serving It Right (SIR) or other recognized responsible beverage certification; see the “Responsible beverage service (RBS) training programs” of this manual for more information.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [sections 35\(2\), 60\(3\)](#)]

Who can apply and who is responsible

Any individual or business may apply for a SEP. For private family special events, the applicant is the individual. For all other permits, the applicant is a member of the organization, corporation or partnership hosting the event. Temporary, probationary, or honorary members of an organization are not eligible to apply for a SEP in the name of the organization.

The permittee is legally responsible for the event and is liable for any contraventions of the Act, Regulation, and/or terms and conditions.

Licenses are not eligible for a SEP when under a suspension because of a contravention. This ineligibility extends to hosting events within an establishment or endorsement areas under a licence that have been suspended.

The following table shows who can apply for a SEP and who is responsible for each type of event.

Event Type	Who can apply and who is responsible
Private – Tastings	A business or non-profit: a corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, or a representative of an unincorporated organization (see “unincorporated organizations” below for examples)
Private – presold tickets (social, cultural, recreational, religious, sporting, or community in nature)	A business or non-profit: a corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, or a representative of an unincorporated organization
Private – Family	An individual who is a family member or friend of the person hosting the event

Private – Competitive event for judging beer or wine (hobby brewer)	An incorporated or unincorporated non-profit organization or representative of a non-profit organization
Public	A business or non-profit: a corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, or representative of an unincorporated organization

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 133](#)]

Unincorporated and incorporated organizations

Prior to submitting a SEP application, the applicant must ensure they are aware of their organization's designation because the permittee is subject to legal and financial obligations. Whether the permittee is an individual or an organization depends on the type of organization.

Entering the wrong type of organization in a SEP application could result in an individual being held legally responsible for any contraventions that should have been the responsibility of the organization. Entering the wrong type of organization in the application can also cause issues regarding PST payment and/or PST rebates.

Unincorporated organizations are generally non-profit in nature, but do not have to be a registered charity under the *Income Tax Act*. Examples of unincorporated organizations include sole proprietorships, amateur sports teams and other community groups.

Unincorporated organizations cannot be permittees; the individual who applies on behalf of the organization is both the applicant and permittee. This individual must be a representative of an unincorporated organization and assumes full responsibility for the event.

Incorporated organizations are registered as incorporations under the *BC Societies Act* or other federal statutes such as the *Canada Not-for-profit Act* and hold a certificate of incorporation. Societies seeking funding or grants from the federal government, such as religious or philanthropic groups, are generally incorporated. Other examples of incorporated organizations include limited companies, cooperatives, and partnerships.

Unlike an unincorporated organization, an incorporated organization is the permittee/applicant and therefore must assume full responsibility for the event as an entity.

A non-profit organization or group that applies for a SEP to raise funds for a charitable purpose must, on request of the Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB) or LCRB:

- Provide evidence that it is registered under the *BC Societies Act* or a federal statute that can give an equivalent status;
- Provide a copy of its Canada Revenue Agency charitable registration certificate or number; or

- Provide evidence by means of meeting minutes, bylaws, rental agreements, bank account statements or other types of evidence to show that it has been in continuous operation for the previous 12 months and is a non-profit organization managed by its membership directly or through an elected board of directors.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 113](#)]

Assessing fitness of a SEP applicant

The general manager may consider whether an applicant is fit and proper to hold a special event. In making this determination, the general manager will apply the provisions of s.13 and s.35 of the Act as well as Branch policy respecting fit and proper assessments.

The general manager may refuse to issue a permit if, at the time of the application, a fine, monetary penalty or suspension which has been imposed on the applicant remains outstanding.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 13, 35\(3\)](#)]

Section 3: Permit Application Process

General

The SEP application is available online at <https://specialevents.bcldb.com/>. The application is accessible from any computer with an internet connection. Public computer access is available at libraries, recreation centres, community facilities and any [ServiceBC Centre](#) throughout the province.

Cost of a SEP and provincial sales tax (PST) requirements

Private special events (including family event permits)

- \$25.00 per day

Public special events

- \$100.00 per day

PST requirements

- All SEP applicants are required to pay PST on the liquor purchased for a special event. Please see section 7 for more information on PST requirements.

[*Provincial Sales Tax Act*, [sections 1](#) "band," "first nation individual," "liquor," [28](#), [37](#), [98](#), [182](#), [182.1](#), Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy]

Refunds

SEP fees are **non-refundable**.

[Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy]

Approval timelines

A SEP application should be submitted well in advance of the event because approval times can vary significantly depending on the size and complexity of the event. Most small, private family events can be approved within 7 - 14 days. Events with more than 500 attendees require LCRB inspector approval and applications must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the event date. The approval process can take longer if other agencies have not been notified of the event in advance. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the appropriate agencies before submitting their application to ensure they receive all required approvals prior to the event start date.

For more precise approval timelines, please contact the [SEP Online Help Line](#) or the local police.

Local authorities

For events held on lands or premises owned or operated by municipal governments, first nations or the provincial or federal government, the applicant must obtain written permission from the local governing authority to provide liquor service. Common examples include events at municipal parks, recreation centres and civic plazas. Written permission from the local authority needs to be kept on-site to ensure it is available for inspection.

Approval requirements vary in each community depending on the size of the event as well as if the event is private or public. If a Committee to Approve Public Events (CAPE) exists in an applicant's area, the applicant is responsible for obtaining the required approvals (see APPENDIX 3: Committee to Approve Public Events (CAPE)).

Local police set the threshold for events they would like to review. If local police believe that the nature and size of an event requires approval, they will need to review the application before the LCRB can issue a permit.

The police may suggest to the LCRB that additional terms and conditions be placed on a permit should they identify potential public safety concerns; additional terms and conditions are subject to LCRB approval.

The LCRB encourages applicants to check with their local authority before applying for a SEP to ensure that liquor service is approved for the proposed event space and to determine if additional local conditions exist.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 115](#)]

Temporary suspension of a SEP for public safety or interest

The general manager may suspend or cancel all or part of a permit, without a hearing, for up to 24 hours if:

- Staff or people attending the event are behaving in a riotous, violent, drunken or disorderly manner; or
- The safety of one or more persons at the event site is threatened.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 48](#)]

Cancellation of a SEP

The general manager may cancel a permit if:

- A circumstance exists that would prevent the permit from being issued;
- The circumstances under which the permit was issued have changed and no longer meet the requirements under the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*;
- The permittee fails to disclose a material fact or makes a false or misleading statement in the application;
- The permit was issued in error;
- The event authorized by the permit could pose a threat to public safety;
- The permittee has contravened the Act or regulations;
- The permittee has contravened a law relating to liquor, of Canada, British Columbia, a treaty first nation or the Nisga'a Nation or a bylaw, relating to liquor, of a municipality, regional district or first nation;
- The permittee has failed to comply with a term or condition of the permit;
- If the permittee has been convicted of an offence under a law of Canada, British Columbia, a treaty first nation or the Nisga'a Nation or under a bylaw of a municipality, regional district or first nation, if the offence relates to an event in respect of an event site or to the operation of an event site; or
- If a municipal, regional, provincial or federal licence, permit, registration or certificate, or a licence, permit, registration or certificate issuable by a first nation, treaty first nation or the Nisga'a Nation, that a permittee is required to hold in order to operate an event site is not issued or is suspended, is cancelled or expires without being renewed.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 50](#)]

Section 4: Licensee Special Events

Special events in a licensed establishment

For special events held in a licensed area of an establishment, the licensee must first apply to the Branch to temporarily suspend their liquor licence. A licensee is limited to six temporary licence changes a year and will be subject to all of the [SEP Terms and Conditions](#).

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 30\(3\)\(a\)](#)]

Beer, wine, and spirit festivals, tastings and exhibitions

General

Beer festivals and wine and liquor tasting events present an opportunity for liquor manufacturers to acquaint the public with their products. These events can be hosted by one or more manufacturers and are primarily food and beverage focussed. The individual hosting the event obtains a SEP on behalf of all manufacturers who are attending and assumes full responsibility for the event. Minors are not permitted at these events.

The following responsibilities apply to SEP holders hosting a tasting event:

- The host of the tasting event obtains the SEP on behalf of all manufacturers who are attending and is the permit holder.
- The permit holder must have available for inspection a valid copy of responsible beverage certification for all staff that are serving or selling liquor.
- The permit holder must ensure that staff do not consume liquor while on duty.
- The permit holder must purchase all the liquor that will be used at the event from the manufacturers prior to the event. Events of a charitable purpose may accept donated liquor for the event. Only liquor lawfully purchased or acquired (by donation) under the SEP may be sold in order to ensure all liquor used at the event has been purchased from an authorized vendor.
 - Permit holders may purchase liquor directly from a licensed manufacturer with an onsite store prior to the event but must obtain a receipt of the liquor purchased from the manufacturer and have it available onsite.
- Serving sizes must not exceed the maximum serving sizes permitted at tasting events. See page 13 of the [SEP Terms & Conditions](#) for maximum serving amounts.
- Manufacturers may serve the product on behalf of the permit holder but may not provide samples to patrons free of charge from their own stock. Only liquor purchased or acquired (by donation) under the SEP can be sold or served.
 - If samples are sold, pricing must be adjusted to the liquor price schedule (see APPENDIX 2: Liquor Pricing and the cost recovery price list), to the size of the serving provided, to the nearest five cents (except when the event is for a charitable purpose). For example, according to the liquor price schedule, \$5.25 plus GST is the maximum price for a 12-oz. serving of beer; an equivalent price for a 4-oz. serving of beer would be \$1.75 plus GST.
- Contract manufacturers attending the event must have the name and location of the manufacturing facility on labels that clearly identify the manufacturer, as required by the [Manufacturer Terms and Conditions](#).

Multiple events

If a tasting event is held in combination with another event in which liquor will be served or sold, two separate SEPs are required. The nature of a tasting event is different than other special events; as such, although the two events may occur together, the tasting area must be clearly delineated to ensure minors cannot enter and liquor is not carried by patrons from the tasting area to the special event area.

UBrews and UVins

UBrews and UVins (Ferment-on-Premises) are not licensed manufacturers and are therefore not eligible for SEPs to conduct tastings of their products. However, under a SEP, the UBrew/UVin may purchase comparable liquor from the LDB or other authorized vendor to allow customers to get a sense of the product they could manufacture. UBrew and UVin licensees are required to de-licence for a special event held in a separate area or room in their establishment.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [sections 8\(3\), 31\(2\)\(b\), 31\(2\)\(j\)](#), *Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*, [section 121\(c\)](#), *Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy*]

All-inclusive entry fees

As outlined in the [SEP Terms and Conditions](#), tasting events in which the primary purpose is to acquaint the public with liquor products may provide an all-inclusive ticket price (e.g. entrance fee and drink prices combined).

All-inclusive entry fees only apply if the primary purpose of an event is to introduce liquor products. Events that have another primary purpose, such as music festivals, are not eligible to charge an all-inclusive entry fee.

As with all special events, the permit holder must ensure precautions are taken to prevent over-service and intoxication.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*, [section 118](#)]

Sponsorships

A licensee may sponsor a sporting, cultural or recreational event that is held under a SEP. This includes events at licensed stadiums, rec centres, concert halls, universities or cultural centres or at catered events.

The host organization or licensee may advertise the event by using the licensee's corporate or brand name or the name of the establishment, and state that the licensee is sponsoring the event.

A licensee and manufacturer may jointly sponsor an event in an establishment if the event is time-limited and the licensee does not have an ongoing association or relationship with the manufacturer.

A licensee may not sponsor an event, activity or organization in which the participants or audience are primarily minors, unless unaccompanied minors are permitted in the establishment. However, a licensee may ask the Branch for permission to sponsor a major international event in which most participants are minors, but attracts a predominately adult audience, such as a junior championship event.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*, [section 173](#), *Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy*]

Events in a manufacturer's facility

Licensed manufacturers may use a SEP for a variety of purposes, both within the manufacturing facility and on or off the manufacturing site.

Onsite events in a licensed facility

A special event may be held in an unlicensed area or in an endorsed area of a licensed facility such as a lounge, on-site store, or picnic area. If the event is held in a licensed area, the licensee must first temporarily suspend their liquor licence beginning 30 minutes before the event until close of business. A SEP is not required for a licensed manufacturer who has a special event area (SEA) endorsement as this endorsement type authorizes the licensee to hold regular events within the SEA.

If a manufacturer wishes to hold a special event outside of a licensed area, a SEP is required. If outside liquor from another manufacturer will be brought into the event, the licensee where the event is being held must temporarily suspend their licence and obtain a SEP.

Licensees are limited to six temporary licence changes per year and 24 SEPs per year.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 15\(1\)\(a\)](#)]

Festivals and tasting events

A licensed manufacturer who does not hold a lounge, special event area, picnic area or tour area endorsement may apply for a SEP if the primary purpose of the event is to acquaint the public with its liquor products. A manufacturer may need to apply for a SEP if it holds a tasting event outside the normal hours of its sampling room, features products from other manufacturers for comparison, or if the event will be held in an unlicensed area on the manufacturer's property.

Licensees may also serve liquor from other manufacturers, provided those products are purchased from the LDB or another authorized vendor.

[Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy]

Third-party events held in a manufacturer's facility

A manufacturer may permit third parties to use its facilities to host special events such as weddings, parties and concerts. If the area where the special event is to be held is subject to a manufacturer licence endorsement (such as a lounge or picnic area endorsement), and the third-party or manufacturer wishes to bring in outside liquor for the event, the manufacturer must:

1. Apply to the LCRB to temporarily suspend the licence or endorsement (see contact information on page 1 of this manual)
2. Apply for a SEP or have a third party apply for a SEP.

Note: Licensees are limited to six temporary licence changes per year.

The SEP holder must take away all leftover liquor after the event ends. The manufacturer must not store, use or sell any leftover product.

The usual rules for SEPs respecting licensee responsibilities, liquor purchases, and licensing conditions apply.

Please note that this section of the SEP policy manual is under review.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Act, [sections 15\(1\) and 31\(1\)\(b\)](#)]

Temporary Offsite Sale Endorsement (pop-up liquor stores)

A SEP holder may allow off-site retail sales by inviting a Licensee Retail Store (LRS) or Wine Store (WS) holding a temporary off-site sale endorsement to attend their event. However, none of the packaged liquor sold may be consumed at the event. To be eligible for this type of endorsement, the primary focus of the event must be on tasting or introducing liquor products and/or accompanying food. For example, a wine festival would qualify, whereas a music festival would not.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 107](#)]

Special Events to Raise Funds for Charitable Purposes

Summary of provisions related to charitable special events

Generally, a SEP will not be issued for special events designed to make a profit unless the purpose of the event is to raise funds for a charitable purpose.

The exception to this is if the event has been designated by the general manager as being of municipal, provincial, national, or international significance, you may charge over the cost-recovery price list and keep the profits from the event. See the “Events of Municipal, Provincial, National, and International Significance” section of this manual for more information.

The permittee is responsible for donating the total profits from the entire special event to a charitable cause when charging above the cost-recovery price list, not just the profits from the sale of liquor.

The hosting organization can apply for a SEP to raise money for its own charitable purposes or on behalf of another organization’s charitable purposes.

Only a non-profit organization whose primary function is to undertake charitable purposes as defined by the Regulation can be the **recipient** of funds raised by the event, and any funds given to such an organization are required to be used for charitable purposes. However, the recipient organization does not have to be a registered charity.

As defined by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), to be considered a non-profit organization, the organization must operate exclusively for the purposes of social welfare, civic improvement, pleasure, sport, recreation, or any other purpose except profit. Neither non-profit nor charitable organizations can use their income to personally benefit their members. However, both types of organizations may pay their staff who may also be members of the organization.

Please visit the [Canada Revenue Agency](#) website for more information on non-profit organizations.

All other rules and regulations outlined in other parts of the manual apply to SEPs of a charitable purpose.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 117.1](#)]

Purposes and organizations that are not charitable

Examples of purposes and organizations that cannot receive funds raised under charitable SEPs include:

- Organizations that devote the majority of their time and resources to the promotion of political objectives or which seek to influence some public issue which is the subject of political dispute; **
- Provincial, municipal or local governments and first nations. These groups cannot receive funds raised under a SEP because governments undertake their functions to fulfill a public service, not to give expression to the public's desire to act charitably; and
- Any type of organization that distributes profits from its operation to members or shareholders for their personal use. This includes a sole proprietorship (the store owner takes the profits for personal use), a co-operative (the members of the co-op own the business and distribute profits among themselves), or a company (profits are distributed to shareholders). A charitable organization may pay its staff to do the charitable work of the organization.

** The Federal *Income Tax Act* allows registered charities to engage in some degree of political discourse: a charity must devote "substantially all" of its resources to its charitable purpose but can dedicate part of its resources to political activities, if those activities are secondary and related to its charitable purpose. The words "substantially all" are defined by the CRA as more than 90%. There is further requirement that the political activities must be nonpartisan and cannot directly or indirectly lend support to any political party or candidate for public office. A charity may, without restriction, provide information briefs to government or elected officials to promote change to laws or policies.

Miscellaneous issues

The federal government, provincial and local governments (and their departments, agencies or divisions) and first nations are eligible to apply for a SEP, including for events that raise funds for charity. They cannot, however, be the recipient of funds raised under a charitable SEP.

Employees, members or organizations that apply for and receive a SEP but leave their employment or organization before the event takes place remain responsible under the terms of the SEP as the permittee. To avoid this responsibility, the individual must notify the LCRB, in writing, that they are no longer an employee or member of the organization. The LCRB will cancel the SEP and advise the employer or the organization of the need to reapply for the SEP (this includes paying the permit fee for a new SEP).

The LCRB may require **proof that a hosting organization exists** before it issues a SEP. In this case, the SEP applicant could submit a copy of the organization's certificate of registration under the *Society Act*, a copy of the constitution of the organization, or a letter certifying the existence of the organization from a person the LCRB case manager accepts as a person independent of the organization but who is knowledgeable of its existence. If the case manager is not satisfied that the organization exists, the SEP may not be issued.

Defining a charitable purpose

An event under a SEP granted for a charitable purpose dedicates funds towards relieving poverty, advancing education or religion, or otherwise benefitting the community – including the advancement of recreation, sports or athletics, culture, aid to persons with disabilities, and youth or senior citizens. “Advancement of” refers to promoting the ability of one or more persons to take part in, either as a participant or a spectator.

The term “charitable purpose” is broad and varied. A charitable purpose is something that serves to benefit a community and fits within the spirit of the definition within the Regulation (see “APPENDIX 1: Examples of charitable purposes”).

In determining whether an event has a charitable purpose, the LCRB will make **a common-sense assessment of the purpose for which funds are being raised: would a reasonable person understand the purpose of the event to be “charitable” as that word is ordinarily used?**

Relief of poverty and advancement of education or religion are relatively clear charitable purposes. The beneficiaries of funds raised through a charitable SEP event may be a food bank, school (which is not part of the regular school system) or religious institution.

Charitable purposes designed for the advancement of culture include the promotion of:

- Racial, ethnic, or gender equality;
- Fostering positive relations between communities; or
- Increasing public knowledge and appreciation of an ethnic group’s art, music, culture, language, and traditions.

The LCRB may use the “public benefit test” as defined by the CRA to determine whether an event has a charitable purpose. Criteria used in making this determination include:

- The event’s purpose and activities provide an objectively measurable and socially useful benefit, directly or indirectly to the general public; and
- The benefit is public in nature or intended for the general public, or a significant portion of it.

Liquor donations for charitable special events

Only non-profit corporations and non-profit organizations are eligible to receive liquor donations for a charitable special event. A liquor manufacturer, agent or consulate may only donate liquor that has been purchased from the LDB.

No one other than a manufacturer, agent or consulate may donate liquor for use at a special event. If a permittee is approved to hold a special event for a charitable purpose, all profits from the event must be directed towards a charitable purpose.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 120\(1\)](#)]

Processing of sales to SEP holders by B.C. Manufacturers

When a SEP holder places an order with a B.C. liquor manufacturer, the manufacturer generates a sales order and proof of payment and gives both items to the SEP holder. The manufacturer then reports the sale to the LDB as a sale from their onsite store.

The SEP holder is required to have the proof of purchase at the event site for inspection.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 121\(1\)\(c\)](#)]

Section 5: Frequency of Issue and Locations

General

Because SEPs are intended for special and infrequent events, any one person or organization can be granted a maximum of three (3) SEPs per month or twenty-four (24) per year. Each day that liquor is served at a SEP event counts towards this total.

The general manager may place further limits on how many SEPs are issued to a person, organization, or place, if it is in the public interest to do so.

The LCRB encourages organizations (such as clubs, local live theatres and sports organizations) that wish to sell and serve liquor at regularly scheduled events to apply for a permanent liquor licence. Information about applying for a permanent liquor licence is available on the LCRB website.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 30\(3\)\(b\)](#), Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy]

Fee for events occurring on more than one site

A separate permit fee is required for events taking place on more than one site.

A music festival in four separate halls requires a separate SEP for each location.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 30\(3\)\(a\)](#), Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy]

Fee for events lasting more than one day

If an event lasts more than one day, the applicant will need a SEP for each day. In such cases, the daily permit fee will be charged for each day that the event takes place. Each day of the event will be listed on the issued SEP.

Service area and event location

The service area of a SEP must be in the same place as the event location. If an event occurs at multiple locations in more than one municipality, and there is more than one organization purchasing the liquor, the applicant may need to apply for a SEP for each separate location. It is not permitted, for example, to hold an event in a local park, with the service area at a community hall a few blocks away.

Separate events held in one large location may require more than one SEP. Each special event area must be clearly separated by permanent or temporary barriers, so that the location of each special event is clearly delineated, and liquor is not moved by staff or customers from one SEP area to another.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [s. 30\(3\)\(a\)](#), Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy]

How often a SEP may be issued for locations

The general manager may determine how frequently a SEP may be issued for a particular location.

The objective of restricting the number of SEPs that may be issued for any given location is to ensure the location does not operate as though it was a licensed establishment. The SEP is not a means to avoid applying for a permanent liquor licence.

The general manager may act upon government or public agency complaints or information from the Compliance and Enforcement Division should the frequency of SEPs at an establishment result in transforming the establishment into the equivalent of a permanently licensed establishment.

Upon receiving a complaint or information that a location is being used for SEP events, the LCRB may inquire into the habitual use of that location and the frequency of SEP events. The LCRB may consult with local government or first nations, local police and others (e.g. the landlord and licensee, if any) as deemed appropriate and determine how frequently a SEP may be issued in respect to that location.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 30\(3\)](#)]

Restrictions on locations eligible for a SEP

Prohibition of a SEP where other liquor licence has been suspended

The general manager may refuse to issue a permit if, at the time of the application, a fine, monetary penalty or suspension which has been imposed remains outstanding.

When a liquor licence is suspended because of an enforcement or administrative process, the suspension is not voluntary; it is the result of a contravention of the Act, Regulation, terms and conditions, or operational requirements of the licence. Liquor licensees cannot mitigate a suspension by obtaining a SEP or renting the space to another party who obtains a SEP to sell liquor.

If an individual or organization has rented a licensed establishment for a SEP event, or if the licensee has applied for or obtained a SEP for the establishment, and that establishment's licence is suspended by the LCRB, liquor cannot be sold or served at the special event within that establishment or on any adjacent property under the suspended licensee's control, whether the SEP was obtained before or after the suspension commenced.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 36\(2\)](#)]

Section 6: Permittee Responsibilities

Administration, purchasing, and reporting

Required documents and records

If applicable, the following documents must be available for inspection at the event site (the documents required will vary depending on the event):

- LCRB approved SEP: posted in the liquor service area where it can be easily viewed;
- The approved security plan (must be posted at the event);
- Exemption letters from the LCRB or documents imposing additional terms and conditions;
- Written permission from the local government or first nation to hold the event on lands or premises owned or operated by a local government or first nation;
- Serving It Right (SIR) or Special Event Server (SES) certification for the permit holder and any staff handling liquor;
- Written designation from the local government if an event has been deemed municipally significant;
- Written designation of an individual who can attend the event on behalf of the permittee, if applicable (see “Requirement to be onsite and delegation”); and
- Legible receipts clearly showing the amount, type(s) and source(s) of all liquor that has been purchased or donated prior to the start of the event.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 121\(1\)](#)]

Reporting

If charging above the cost-recovery price list, the permittee of a SEP with a charitable purpose has up to 60 days after the event ends to submit a summary of event revenues and expenses along with proof that proceeds, after expenses have been paid, were directed to a charitable purpose. To report the revenues and expenses associated with the charitable event, permittees can submit their own report, financial statements or complete the [Charity Fund-Raising Revenue Report](#) found on the LCRB website. Proof of proceeds can include a letter, cancelled cheque or newspaper article.

Reports can be submitted to the LCRB via email, mail, or fax. The LCRB will review the documentation provided and may request further documentation if necessary. Reporting is a requirement even if the charitable event does not make a profit.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [sections 122\(2\) and \(3\)](#)]

Responsible beverage service (RBS) training programs

For all events, the SEP applicant, managers, and those serving liquor must hold valid RBS certification.

SIR and SES are courses in RBS; they are designed to inform people of their rights and responsibilities when serving alcohol. The SIR course is aimed at those who regularly sell or serve alcohol or supervise its sale and service. The SES program is an abridged version of SIR, aimed at SEP holders and their staff. SIR provides more comprehensive responsible beverage service training, which is why SIR holders are not also required to take the SES course.

There is a fee and short test for each training course that can be completed online at:

<http://www.servingitright.com/> or <http://www.specialeventserver.com/>.

Fees

- The SIR certificate fee is \$35.00.
- The SES certificate fee is \$20.00.

The following table summarizes the training requirements for a SEP:

Event Size	Group	Training Requirements
Small SEP event (<500 guests)	Permittee	SES
	Managers	SES
	Paid or unpaid servers	SES
Large SEP event (500+ guests)	Permittee	SIR
	Managers	SIR
	Paid or unpaid servers	SES

Exemptions

Managers, permittees or servers currently holding a valid SIR certificate are not required to also complete the SES course. Out-of-Province equivalent training is accepted in lieu of RBS certification for servers, **but not for managers or permittees.**

SEP holders are responsible for ensuring that servers who have completed training in other jurisdictions are informed about relevant BC legislation, such as the legal drinking age and any relevant operating terms and conditions that apply to their event.

Certificates from other jurisdictions without an expiry date will be deemed expired and will no longer be accepted as valid RBS certification after December 15, 2020.

SIR and SES certificates are valid for 5 years and can be renewed online at the above links.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 60\(3\)](#), *Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*, [sections 184\(5\)](#), [185\(2\)\(3\)](#), [186\(1\)\(2\)](#), [189](#), [190](#)]

Requirement to be onsite and delegation

When the host of the event is an individual permittee (e.g. a parent hosting a wedding reception), they are required to be at the event unless they have delegated to the LCRB, in writing, another responsible party; however, the permittee remains legally responsible for liquor service at all times. The delegated individual must also hold valid RBS certification.

When the permittee (host) of the event is an organization, the organization is required to appoint a permittee with RBS certification to be responsible for liquor service. The appointee is required to be onsite throughout the duration of the event unless another person who holds the appropriate RBS certification has been delegated in writing as the responsible party. The person appointed or delegated to be responsible for liquor service may be a member of the organization or event manager. The SEP holder remains legally responsible for liquor service.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*, [sections 116\(b\)](#), [117\(a\)\(b\)](#)]

Replacement permittee

If the permittee is unable to be on site at the event and cannot, or chooses not to, delegate an individual to be in attendance on their behalf, the permittee is responsible for cancelling the permit under their name. In order to hold the event, another individual must apply for a SEP under their name.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 35\(4\)](#)]

Entry of minors and acceptable identification

Except for liquor-focussed beverage gardens, minors are permitted to attend SEPs as non-drinking patrons, entertainers or employees. Minors are prohibited from consuming, selling, serving or handling liquor – including selling drink tickets.

Anyone serving liquor (including paid and unpaid servers) is responsible for ensuring that patrons are of legal drinking age. Where identification is required to confirm that a patron is at least 19 years old, **two** pieces of identification are required:

- One piece of identification must be government-issued and must have the person's name, date of birth and photograph—such as a passport, BC Identification card, or driver's license with a photo.
- The second piece of identification must have the person's name and either a signature OR photograph—such as a BC Services card, credit card or social insurance card.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*, [section 158, 165\(f\)](#)]

Intoxicated patrons

The permittee is responsible for ensuring that an intoxicated person is not served or sold liquor. Permittees must forbid a person to enter or remain at the event if the person is intoxicated or if the permittee deems the person's presence undesirable for some other legitimate reason.

If a person becomes intoxicated at a special event, the permittee or person delegated by the permittee is responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure that the intoxicated person does not harm themselves or others while on the premises or after leaving the event.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [sections 61\(2\)\(3\), 75](#)]

Duty of care

According to the *Occupier's Liability Act*, the "occupier" (or person in possession of or responsible for the premises) has a duty of care. Permittees should acquaint themselves with their legal responsibilities to ensure the safety of guests on the premises, as well as to prevent harm that may occur after guests have left the premises.

Section 7: Sources of Liquor, Taxation, and Product Returns

Sources of liquor

The SEP holder is responsible for purchasing all liquor required for the event from an LDB approved outlet, unless a liquor manufacturer or agent has donated liquor for the SEP. The one exception to this requirement is that the host of a family special event may serve (but not sell) homemade beer, cider, wine or product made at a licensed UBrew or UVin (Ferment-on-Premises).

The *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* regulates liquor supply to ensure safe and responsible conduct and liquor consumption at licensed functions.

SEP holders are responsible for ensuring that guests do not bring their own liquor to a special event. Bring your own liquor (“BYOB”) events are not eligible for a SEP because they cannot be licensed. BYOB events are only permitted at a private place or residence.

Even if the permittee is a licensee of a permanent establishment, all liquor needs to be purchased separately under the SEP. The licensed establishment’s existing liquor stock cannot be used.

The amount of liquor that may be purchased under a SEP is listed on the face of the permit application. The LCRB or local police may restrict the quantity of liquor allowed for any SEP.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [sections 120, 140](#)]

Liquor purchase

Unless specifically exempted by the general manager of the LCRB, liquor sold or served at a special event may only be purchased from:

- A BC Liquor Store (government liquor store);
- BC wineries with an onsite store;
- BC breweries with an onsite store;
- BC distilleries with an onsite store;
- Rural agency stores (RAS) that have been authorized by the LDB to sell to SEP holders; or
- Independent Wine Stores (for private special events only, and only if the liquor will not be resold).

SEP holders that wish to purchase liquor from a RAS can contact the LDB for information regarding which stores are authorized to sell liquor to SEP holders.

Liquor sold or served at a special event **may not** be purchased from any of the following:

- Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) outlets;
- Licensee retail stores (private liquor stores);
- Directly from a manufacturer without an onsite store;
- Off-site winery stores;
- Establishments with off-premise sales; or
- UBrew and/or UVin (Ferment-on-Premises) stores.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 120](#)]

Donated liquor

Only a consulate, liquor manufacturer or agent may donate liquor that has been purchased from the LDB to a non-profit organization, agency or group holding a special event if the event is to raise funds for a charitable purpose. See section 117.1 of the Regulations for more information on charitable purposes.

Agents and manufacturers may be eligible to purchase liquor from the LDB at the wholesale price if donating the liquor for a charitable event, or when the liquor is for an Import Liquor Supplier Association tasting event. Most types of manufacturers may purchase the liquor for donation from their own on-site store. Further information is available from the LDB wholesale website at: <https://wholesale.bclddb.com/resources/vendors>.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 120\(1\)](#)]

Consular liquor

What is consular liquor?

Consular liquor is liquor that is directly imported into Canada by an embassy or consulate from the country it represents under a diplomatic agreement. Consular liquor coming into B.C. must be approved by the federal government and the LDB.

Consular liquor may only be consumed on the embassy or consulate property, at an off-site diplomatic event, or at an event organized by a registered Canadian charity that will be attended by an official from the embassy or consulate.

For more information regarding the approval process for consular liquor, contact the LDB's Industry Programs Coordinator by telephone at 604 252-6233 or by email at regemail@bclddb.com.

Liquor licencing requirements for an event with consular liquor

Diplomatic events:

- A SEP from the LCRB is required unless the event is held in a licensed establishment or a **private place***
- A consular representative must be in attendance
- Admission to the event must be by invitation only
- Liquor must be provided to guests free of charge
- The letter of approval for consular liquor from the LDB must be posted at the event
- Any remaining consular liquor must be returned to the consulate

Charitable events:

- A SEP is not required if the event is held at a **private place*** and liquor is provided to guests free of charge
- An event held in a **public place** requires a SEP, unless the event is held in a licensed establishment (see "Licensed establishment" below)
- The event organizer must be a charity registered with the CRA
- A consular representative must be in attendance
- The letter of approval for consular liquor from the LDB must be posted at the event
- Any remaining consular liquor must be returned to the consulate
- The event organizer must provide the LCRB with a financial statement if requested

Licensed establishment:

- If the diplomatic or charitable event is held in a licensed area of an establishment, the establishment does not need to apply to temporarily suspend liquor service. The licensee may serve consular liquor as well as their own liquor at the event; however, they must record the consular liquor that has been served and keep the records of their own liquor sales.

Provincial Sales Tax (PST)

The PST charged for liquor is in addition to the prescribed permit fee.

PST is paid by the SEP applicant for the following:

- The cost of the liquor (paid at the time of purchase) – regardless of whether the liquor is served for free or sold; and
- PST on expected proceeds – the applicant pays the difference between the price paid for the liquor and the expected liquor sales. The estimated PST is prepaid as a condition of being issued a SEP.
-

PST refunds

A SEP holder may be eligible for a PST refund if sales were less than estimated or the SEP was cancelled.

More information on [PST Bulletin 300](#) and liquor sales is available on the [BC Ministry of Finance website](#) or by telephone at 1-877-388-4440.

The Ministry of Finance
PO Box 9442 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC
V8W 9V4

Goods and services tax (GST)

GST is administered by the federal government. If an organization is registered with the CRA as a “GST/HST registrant,” it is required to collect and account for the GST according to the CRA’s requirements for the liquor sales. If an organization is not a “GST/HST registrant,” it cannot collect GST on liquor sales. For more information concerning basic GST/HST guidelines for charities, please [contact the CRA](#).

The maximum liquor prices, including GST, are outlined in the Cost Recovery Price List (see APPENDIX 2).

Excess liquor

SEP holders are not required to return liquor left over from a special event. However, the leftover liquor, whether it has been opened or not, cannot be resold, used for another event, or used under a different licence or permit.

The exception to this is for liquor that has been donated by a manufacturer or agent to a non-profit organization or non-profit corporation holding an event to raise funds for a charitable purpose. In this case, liquor may be removed from the event by the agent or manufacturer and donated to a subsequent charitable SEP that is approved by the LDB for the donation of liquor purchased at the wholesale price. The following conditions apply:

- Only unopened liquor may be donated to a subsequent event; and
- The agent or manufacturer provides both the original permittee and any subsequent permittee with records demonstrating the liquor was purchased through LDB-approved processes, has purchase invoices from the LDB or their manufacturer's on-site store, and has these documents available for inspection at the event.

[Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy]

Product returns to BC Liquor Stores

Proof of purchase is required to obtain a refund for products purchased at BC Liquor Stores and all returns are subject to a 10% restocking fee.

The LDB will only accept products fit for resale – that is, products whose packages are sealed, labels are intact, cases of beer or cider are unopened and there is no evidence of mishandling. The liquor store manager has the authority to determine whether a returned product is fit for resale. Please [contact the LDB](#) for more information on product returns.

[*Liquor Distribution Act*, [section 24\(4\)\(a\)](#)]

Section 8: Permit Conditions

Hours of sale or service

Hours of sale or service are limited to the hours between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m. of the following day, if a special event is held **indoors**, and 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. if the event is held **outdoors**. (Police, local government or first nations may place further limits on hours.)

If the SEP applicant wishes to hold an event between 2:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. for an indoor event or past 10:00 p.m. for an outdoor event, an exemption request will be automatically sent through the online application system for approval by a SEP case manager. The applicant will need to obtain approval from the local police and local government or first nation as part of the exemption process. See the “Requests for extension of hours” section of this manual for more information.

The sale and service of liquor is limited to the time specified on the SEP. Consumption of liquor must end and all liquor must be removed from patrons within 30 minutes of the end of liquor service. It is a contravention of the SEP for a patron to consume liquor beyond 30 minutes after liquor service has ended.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [sections 91, 117\(f\)](#), Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy]

Sales strategies

SEP holders must ensure their sales strategy is in accordance with the LCLA and minimizes the health and social harms of alcohol. A compliant sales strategy is achieved by maintaining sales prices during the event (for example, no “two-for-one” drink specials) and discouraging over-consumption.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 118](#)]

Posting of permit

The permittee is responsible for posting the SEP and any letters granting exceptions or placing additional conditions on the permit in a visible location in the bar or service area during the hours the permit is in effect.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 139\(3\)](#)]

Security, door control and enclosed service area

Liquor service throughout the whole event site is generally permitted at public events under a SEP. A beverage garden will be imposed only if there are public safety reasons for doing so. Inspectors will assess the risk to public safety based on factors that include event type, size and duration; patron demographic; lighting; site visibility; permittee compliance history; crowd density and security presence. (See APPENDIX 4: Risk Assessment).

Liquor may be served at any special event if the service area is surrounded by a barrier sufficient to confine the sale, service and consumption of alcohol. The same is true for beverage gardens in which the sale, service, and consumption of liquor is limited to the service area outlined on the permit. Police or inspectors may impose perimeter fencing requirements for either the whole site or for the beverage garden. The event must have controlled entry and exit points through which inspectors may access the event. In addition to other reasonable security features, the entrance area where ID is verified should be well lit.

Only individuals licensed under the BC *Security Services Act* are eligible to provide paid or unpaid event security for the special event. This includes event security staff who will be responsible for preventing persons who exhibit aggressive or unruly behaviour from entering the event, as well as persons carrying a weapon or drugs and for removing, through means of persuasion or otherwise, persons who become aggressive or who present a safety risk to others at the event. Although individuals providing security commonly check for identification of persons entering an event and ensure that the number of persons within the event do not exceed the maximum allowed capacity, these are not duties that are restricted to individuals providing security. For example, if an individual checking identification is not expected to perform other tasks associated with the security of the event, that individual does not need to be licensed under the *Security Services Act*. Further information about licensing requirements for security staff can be found at: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/security-services/security-industry-licensing>.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 117\(l\)](#)]

Security plan

Security plans are required for all events in which 500 or more people are expected to attend; they may also be required by an inspector or police for other events when deemed necessary. A security plan outlines how the permittee will control crowds, prevent minors from accessing liquor and prevent overconsumption. As part of the application process, the SEP applicant confirms whether a security plan is required and if so, that it has been approved by the LCRB. If a permit has been issued but the applicant does not have an approved security plan when one is required, the LCRB or local police may cancel the SEP or take enforcement action against the permittee.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 12\(a\)](#)]

Other Permit Conditions

Pre-sale of entry tickets for private events

To be eligible for a private SEP, tickets or invitations to the event are required to be sold or reserved prior to the start time of the event. For example, tickets would have to be sold prior to doors opening at 7:00 p.m. for a concert that begins at 8:00 p.m. Tickets must not be available for purchase at the door.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 113\(1\)\(b\), 2\(b\), 3\(b\)](#)]

Variety of liquor

Large, public special events of 500 or more attendees are required to have at least 20% of another manufacturer's liquor available in each product category that is sold. For example, if a permittee is planning to sell only beer at their event, they must have at least 20% of another manufacturer's product available. There should be equal opportunity to purchase each liquor product at the event (i.e. all beer, cider, wine, and spirits are chilled).

SEP holders may be required to produce a purchase receipt and product return records, if applicable, to an inspector upon request.

Charitable events are exempt from this requirement and may enter into exclusivity agreements with liquor manufacturers to sell specific brands.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [sections 31\(i\), 62\(1\), 62\(2\), 62\(3\)](#), Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 181](#)]

Provision of food

As part of responsible beverage service, it is strongly recommended that SEP holders for both private and public events ensure there is an adequate variety and supply of food and non-alcoholic beverages available to mitigate the potential for intoxication.

Advertising

Advertising that indicates that liquor will be sold or served at a private special event is not permitted. For example, advertisements may not show wine glasses or beer steins or mention that there will be a “wine tent” or “beverage garden” as part of the special event. Text or graphics that depict or imply the availability of liquor are also not permitted.

The SEP holder of a public event may advertise liquor or the availability of liquor in relation to the special event. The advertisement may only state that liquor will be available for sale at the event and the manufacturers, liquor products and prices of liquor that will be available for sale.

Both private and public events may advertise the name of the event, its location, a description of any entertainment provided, and the hours in which food or refreshments will be available.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 64\(1\)](#), *Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*, [section 173](#)]

Bottle labels

Permittees may add decorative labels to liquor products provided the original labels are not removed and it remains possible to clearly read all parts of the original label.

[Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy]

Service area and event location

The service area of a special event must be in the same place as the event location. If an event occurs at multiple locations in more than one municipality, and there is more than one organization purchasing the liquor, the applicant may need to apply for a SEP for each separate location. It is not permitted, for example, to hold an event in a local park, with the service area at a community hall a few blocks away.

Separate events held in one large location may require more than one SEP. Each SEP area must be clearly separated by permanent or temporary barriers, so that the location of each special event is clearly delineated, and liquor is not moved by staff or customers from one SEP area to another.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [s. 30\(3\)\(a\)](#), *Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy*]

Section 9: Entertainment

The general manager is responsible for supervising the conduct and operation of licensed establishments – including special events in licensed establishments – and to consider public interest when setting permit terms and conditions. This includes terms and conditions for entertainment provided at special events.

LCRB staff may use the following criteria when reviewing a SEP application:

- The entertainment does not interfere with the permittee’s ability to maintain effective management and control of the event and its participants (for example, if the entertainment area is located in part of a licensed area, the permittee is responsible for preventing overcrowding to enable staff to observe and control patron conduct);
- The entertainment will not negatively affect the health and/or physical safety of the public, staff, performers and patrons (activities that might be considered safe in other settings may not be safe in an environment in which alcohol is being consumed because of alcohol’s effect on mental acuity, physical dexterity and judgement);
- The entertainment does not impose noise, nuisance or other negative impacts on nearby residents and businesses; and
- The entertainment complies with local bylaws.

Entertainment generally permitted under a SEP includes:

- Live radio and television broadcasts;
- Recorded music, including DJ performances;
- Patron-participation dancing;
- Patron-participation sports where the physical safety of performers and patrons is not at risk, such as darts, shuffleboard, foosball, billiards, pool, video arcade style games, basketball, ice or roller hockey, curling and bowling;
- Prize-fighting, kick-boxing, and other contact sports in which there is no patron participation, and in which the permittee can demonstrate that adequate safeguards are in place to protect patrons, staff and the public;
- Computers that offer internet access; and
- Board or card games, such as cribbage.

Entertainment, games and activities that may jeopardize patron or public safety are not permitted under a SEP.

Local governments are given the power under s. 38(1) of the Act to restrict or prohibit, by bylaw, any form of entertainment, whether permitted under the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* and Regulation or under a permit term and condition.

The LCRB may also impose a permit term or condition that approves, prohibits, restricts or limits any type or form of game or entertainment at a SEP. The SEP holder is responsible for ensuring the event complies with all other licensing requirements outside of the LCRB.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 31\(2\)\(c\)](#)]

Live performances

Live performances can range from comedy shows, musical performances and fashion shows to exotic dance performances and other adult-oriented performances.

The LCRB regulates live performances to prevent harm to performers, patrons and the larger community and to protect animals from improper treatment.

Organizations eligible to apply for a SEP may apply to hold live performances in a licensed or unlicensed theatre or other type of venue. To hold a special event in an area of an establishment that is already licensed, the licensee needs to temporarily suspend their liquor licence.

Performances involving animals

SEP holders are responsible for obtaining the necessary permit(s) to have animals at their event.

Permittees should consult the relevant local government or other agency to determine if a permit is required.

[Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy]

Audio, film, video and television

Audio, film, video and television entertainment is subject to the same limitations as other forms of entertainment. Any presentation of such entertainment must be compatible with the nature of the special event; for example, minors would not be permitted at events in which explicit material may be shown. The entertainment must not interfere with the permittee's ability to maintain effective management and control of the event, and must not result in noise, nuisance, or other negative impacts on nearby residents and businesses. It is the permittee's responsibility to ensure proper security is in place, as needed.

All events containing audio, film, video and/or television are responsible for adhering to Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications (CRTC) standards and the Criminal Code of Canada.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 30\(3\)\(a\)](#)]

Section 10: Role Of the LCRB

Exemptions

Exemptions are required when an applicant requests permission to operate outside LCRB policies. Exemption requests are automatically sent to an LCRB case manager for review and approval through the online application portal. There is no charge to review an exemption request.

Exemptions from normal SEP policies include permission to:

- Charge above the cost recovery price list if the proceeds from the event are donated to a non-profit organization with a charitable purpose;
- Charge above the cost recovery price list and keep the profits provided the event has been designated of municipal, provincial, national or international significance; and
- Extend the hours of a SEP beyond 10:00 p.m. for outdoor events or 2:00 a.m. for indoor events.

An exemption to the maximum number of SEP issued per month (3) or year (24) will be reviewed upon receipt of a detailed explanation of the applicant's need for the exemption, including why they should not be required to apply for a regular liquor licence if they wish to obtain more than 24 SEPs per year.

Requests for extension of hours

The LCRB will consider the following factors when approving events requesting hours outside of the allowable timeframe:

- Location of the event;
- Nature of the event (i.e. a music festival vs. an art exhibition);
- Presence of minors;
- Local government, first nation or police concerns; and
- Public safety risks.

Events of municipal, provincial, national or international significance

The LCRB may exempt SEP holders from donating event profits to charity when charging above the cost recovery price, provided the event is of municipal, provincial, national or international significance.

Different criteria will be used to determine whether an event is of municipal significance versus provincial, national or international significance.

Municipal significance

Municipally significant events are of unique importance to a specific municipality. For example, a municipally significant event may have historical value to the particular region or provide benefit to the community at large. While support and approval from the municipality is required, the applicant must also apply for a SEP through the LCRB.

Each municipality may set its own criteria in determining whether an event is of municipal significance. Applicants should apply well enough in advance to ensure local government has sufficient time to review the application prior to the event date.

- An event of municipal significance requires a municipal resolution or a letter from a delegated municipal official designating the event as “municipally significant.”
- Proof of designation as a municipally significant event must be at the event site for inspection.

Provincial, national or international significance

The LCRB will review exemption requests for provincially, nationally and internationally significant events. Qualified events must meet the following criteria:

- The event features participants and/or performers that are primarily of provincial, national or international origin;
- The event attracts spectators from around the province, Canada, or the world; and
- The event receives province-wide, nation-wide or world-wide media coverage.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 114\(2\)\(b\)](#)]

Major events and security plan guidelines

On the SEP application, event holders with 500 or more attendees are required to answer security-related questions about their event and provide details of how the event will be safely managed. A security plan or site plan is required for all events with over 500 people. Any supporting documents relating to the application and approval of the SEP must be kept onsite for inspection.

Approval requirements will depend on whether the event is private or public. If local police believe that an event’s size and/or nature require approval, they must review the SEP application before LCRB issues a permit. An inspector or the local police may also request a security plan for events below the 500-person threshold.

If the police identify potential enforcement concerns, they may recommend that LCRB apply additional terms and conditions to the permit.

LCRB will scan the security plan and send it, along with any attachments, as a PDF document, to the appropriate inspector (or regional manager for assignment to an inspector) and local authorities for review.

A local inspector will review a security plan upon receipt; the inspector may consult with police on the adequacy of the plan.

The inspector may accept the plan as adequate or require different or additional measures to promote security and public safety at the event. Where changes are needed, the inspector will work directly with the applicant and/or local police.

If the security plan is seriously deficient or the SEP applicant does not modify the plan as requested by the inspector, the inspector may:

- Recommend the SEP or exemptions for the SEP not be granted, or
- Recommend that terms and conditions or endorsements be imposed on the SEP.

In either of the above cases, the inspector may add terms and conditions to the SEP as necessary.

If a permit has been issued but the applicant does not have an approved security plan when one is required, the LCRB or local police may cancel the SEP or take enforcement action against the permittee.

The SEP holder is responsible for posting the approved security plan with the SEP (and any other required documents) and must be available for inspection by inspectors or police at any time during the event. Failure to do so is a contravention of the terms and conditions of the SEP.

Events occurring on public property require local government or first nation approval. Depending on its nature, the event may also require municipal or other applicable agency approvals.

SEP applicants must submit the security plan to the LCRB at least two weeks before the event, although they are strongly encouraged to submit it before the two-week deadline to ensure adequate processing time. The security plan must be approved by the LCRB and local police before a SEP can be issued.

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 115](#), *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 31\(1\)\(a\)](#), [31\(2\)](#)]

Section 11: Compliance and Enforcement

Enforcement process

The SEP specifies the times and date(s) that it is valid. After the event, the permit expires, and liquor can no longer be served or sold using that permit. The SEP holder remains liable for any contraventions which occurred while the permit was in effect and the LCRB may take action for up to 6 months after the end of the event.

More information on the enforcement process is available at <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/liquor-regulation-licensing/compliance-enforcement/enforcement-process>.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 51\(1\)](#) and [53\(b\)](#)]

Inspections

Inspectors conduct regular, unannounced inspections of special events to ensure permittees are following the Act and Regulations and the terms and conditions of their permit. In addition, an inspector may conduct an inspection in response to a complaint from a member of the public, a licensee, a local government/first nation, police or any other agency.

In cases where an inspector has been working with event organizers or if additional inspection services are necessary while an event is in progress, an additional fee will be assessed to cover the cost of such services.

Liquor seizures

Inspectors and police both have authority to seize liquor from a special event if they believe it to be possessed illegally; they can either destroy the liquor immediately or hold it in storage for 30 days.

When liquor is seized, a former permittee may apply to the LCRB within 30 days from the time the liquor was seized and submit a claim to have the liquor returned or be compensated for the value of the liquor if it has been destroyed. The LCRB will review the claim to determine whether it successfully demonstrates that the liquor was legally obtained.

More information regarding liquor seizures and compensation is available at <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/liquor-regulation-licensing/compliance-enforcement/liquor-seizures>.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [sections 47\(1\)\(2\)\(3\)](#)]

Penalties

The penalties for various contraventions are set out in Schedule 2 of the Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation.

If the hearing delegate finds that the contravention(s) occurred and a monetary penalty is warranted, they are bound to follow the minimums set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulation. The hearing delegate is not required to impose the penalty proposed in the Notice of Enforcement Action and may impose higher penalties than those in the penalty schedule, subject to the maximums in the Act when it is in the public interest to do so.

Reconsideration Process

Reconsideration allows a permittee to have enforcement orders reviewed without having to apply to the court for judicial review, as long as the application for reconsideration meets the prescribed grounds.

More information on the reconsideration process is available at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/liquor-regulation-licensing/bc-liquor-control-compliance-and-enforcement/bc-liquor-reconsideration-process>.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 53.1](#)]

When a permit is required but not obtained

It is an offence under the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, [section 57\(1\)\(a\)](#) and punishable by law, to sell liquor without a permit or licence.

[*Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, section [8\(2\)\(a\)](#)]

APPENDIX 1: Examples of charitable purposes

Acceptable as a Charitable Purpose	Not Acceptable as a Charitable Purpose and other notes
<p>An event to raise funds for a food bank.</p> <p>(relief of poverty)</p>	
<p>An event to raise funds to cover the cost of relief supplies for victims of a natural disaster in another country.</p> <p>(relief of poverty)</p>	
<p>An event to raise money to provide famine relief, treatment for tropical or other diseases, eye surgery clinics or general health and welfare services in foreign countries.</p> <p>(relief of poverty)</p>	
<p>An event to raise funds for a private, non-profit school (does not need to be registered under the <i>Income Tax Act</i>, but most are).</p> <p>(advancement of education)</p> <p>Public and private universities are usually registered charities: check the Canada Revenue Agency website if in doubt.</p>	<p>An event to raise money for a public school because government functions are not charitable. Parent Advisory Committees (PAC) of public schools are not government, so they may raise funds for the public school if the funds are not used to purchase basic school items that government is responsible for supplying. For example, the PAC may raise funds for school activities which would fall under the category of a charitable purpose.</p> <p>A private, for-profit educational institution, like Sylvan Learning, is a business; although dedicated to education, this type of business is not a charity.</p>
<p>An event to raise money to build, repair, support or staff a religious establishment.</p> <p>(advancement of religion)</p>	<p>An event to raise money to send a church member on a missionary trip to Mexico.</p>
<p>An event hosted by a service organization to raise funds for a family whose house and possessions have burned down.</p> <p>In this case, the service organization is the recipient of the funds it raises and giving the money to the family is how it disburses the funds</p>	

<p>for a charitable purpose.</p> <p>(other purposes beneficial to the community)</p>	
<p>An event to raise money to benefit an ecological reserve.</p> <p>(other purposes beneficial to the community)</p>	
<p>An event to raise money for a hospital foundation.</p> <p>(other purposes beneficial to the community)</p>	<p>Raising funds to cover the cost of funeral expenses for a family member.</p>
<p>Raising funds to cover the cost of building a children’s playground on public land such as a public park or Crown land.</p> <p>(advancement of recreation)</p>	<p>Raising funds to cover the cost of building a children’s playground on private land such as a theme park, private housing estate, or private resort.</p>
<p>Raising funds to cover the cost of a service club providing senior’s programming in a community centre.</p> <p>(advancement of recreation; advancement of seniors)</p>	<p>Raising funds to cover programming costs at a private seniors’ residence.</p>
<p>Raising funds for a non-profit sports organization (team or league), in which the players are not paid, to purchase uniforms or sports equipment. Any durable goods (equipment, uniforms, etc.) purchased with the funds need to remain the property of the organization.</p> <p>(advancement of sports or athletics)</p>	<p>Raising funds to be used by individuals for their sole personal benefit; for example, buying a uniform that becomes the property of the player or paying the travel expenses of an individual to attend a professional, for-profit tournament.</p>
<p>Raising funds to cover the expenses of participation in a sports competition sponsored by a non-profit sports organization or league to which the player belongs and in which the players are not paid to participate. These expenses could include entry fees, travel expenses to attend a competition (transportation, food, accommodations), or insurance premiums.</p> <p>(advancement of sports or athletics)</p>	<p>Raising funds to cover the expenses of participation in a for-profit sports competition or league.</p>
<p>Raising funds for a disability related organization such as Muscular Dystrophy Canada, Multiple Sclerosis Canada or the Canadian Cancer Society</p>	<p>Raising money for a pharmaceutical company to pursue research on new drugs.</p>

<p>which supports direct service to individuals (i.e. equipment loans, funding assistance or peer support), pays for research staff and equipment, and acts as an advocacy group for its members.</p> <p>(advancement of aid to the disabled or handicapped)</p>	
<p>Raising funds for a community-based aboriginal society to hire linguists to work with elders to preserve their language on tape and hire teachers to teach the language (or more than one language as the case may be) to their youth.</p> <p>(advancement of culture)</p>	<p>Raising funds for a consultant company to hire archaeologists to excavate a hotel building site which may have cultural significance.</p>
<p>Raising funds for an ethnic group to showcase traditional arts and crafts in a public museum.</p> <p>(advancement of culture)</p>	<p>Raising funds to hold an event showcasing art from around the province for individual promotion and purchase.</p> <p>Raising funds for an artist to hold an art exhibition showcasing their work for promotion and purchase.</p>
<p>Raising funds for a local non-profit symphony orchestra to pay its players.</p> <p>(advancement of culture)</p>	<p>Raising funds for a professional (i.e. for-profit company) song and dance ensemble.</p>
<p>Raising funds to send a group of high school students to participate in a model United Nations or Legislative Assembly program.</p> <p>(advancement of youth or senior citizens)</p>	<p>Raising funds to sponsor a contestant in a singing competition.</p>
<p>Raising funds for a community lawn bowling association's masters' competition.</p> <p>(advancement of youth or senior citizens)</p>	<p>Raising funds to send a senior golfer to the Masters' Tournament in another city.</p>

[Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation, [section 114\(2\)](#)]

APPENDIX 2: Liquor pricing and the cost recovery price list

The LCRB sets the maximum prices that can be charged for liquor sold under a SEP. The cost-recovery price list is designed to ensure the prices charged for liquor cover only the “operating costs” of serving and selling the liquor, which only include the cost of the liquor, mix, glasses, ice and taxes. The prices do not include costs such as hall rental, entertainment or security.

***Liquor cannot be sold “by donation.”**

	Maximum Single Serving Size*	Public or Private Function (including PST)	Public or Private Function with PST and GST** (5%)
Packaged beer, cider or cooler	2 standard sized cans (355 ml) or bottles – up to 12 oz. (341 ml) each	Per can or bottle - \$5.00	Per can or bottle - \$5.25
Beer, cider or cooler	By the glass – up to 24 oz. (682 ml)	Per 12 oz. (341 ml) glass - \$5.00	Per 12 oz. (341 ml) glass - \$5.25
Wine	By the glass – up to 10 oz. (284 ml) By the bottle up to 750 ml (only if consumed by 2 or more people with food)	Per 5 oz. (142 ml) glass - \$7.00***	Per 5 oz. (142 ml) glass - \$7.35***
Spirits	3 oz. (85 ml)	Per 1.5 oz. (43 ml) - \$5.00	Per 1.5 oz. (43 ml) - \$5.25

The prices listed above are **maximums** and may only be exceeded if the purpose of the event is to raise funds for charity or if the event has been designated of municipal, provincial, national or international significance. If the permittee exceeds any price on the price list, they are required to donate all profits from the special event to a non-profit organization whose primary function is to carry out charitable purposes.

Patrons may be served more than once, provided servers do not exceed the maximum single serving size at any given time. The permittee must encourage responsible consumption at all times and ensure that strict limits are followed for maximum serving sizes.

Only organizations with a GST registration number may include the GST in the liquor price.

Family, private and public events may apply for an exemption to charge more than \$7.00 per serving of wine/champagne if it is for a cost recovery purpose.

APPENDIX 3: Committee to Approve Public Events (CAPE)

A Committee to Approve Public Events (CAPE) is a locally-based committee with a mandate to approve in principle public special events held within that municipality, first nation or regional district. A CAPE may be responsible for more than one municipality or electoral area within a regional district. In such a situation, different RCMP detachments, inspectors, regular licensees and municipal police forces may be involved in the approval process.

A CAPE monitors the number of SEPs granted within a community and ensures that SEPs are not used as an alternative to obtain a permanent liquor licence. In addition, the committee provides a means for a local community to take active control of public event licensing and helps ensure that all parties who have an interest in, and are affected by these events, can participate in the process. A CAPE ensures each event is in the community interest and conforms to the policy criteria for the approval of public events.

Questions concerning a CAPE may be directed to the applicable municipality or first nation.

APPENDIX 4: Risk Assessment

Inspectors may refer to the following chart when considering whether to allow whole-site liquor service or to impose a beverage garden at a special event. The chart and the levels associated with each risk factor are intended to be guidelines, not strict limitations.

	Risk factor										
Risk level		10 (low)	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100 (high)
Event size	500				5000						50,000
Event character	i.e. classical, jazz music concert	family-oriented (i.e. Greek-fest)	participation events i.e. running event			event with accessible machinery (exhibition grounds with rides)			i.e. rock, heavy-metal, punk concert with mosh-pit / adult-oriented event		

Added
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	Patron demographic	seniors	families	predominantly adults or teens		possible criminal affiliations
	Event duration	2 – 3 hours	6 -hours			12 hours / multi-day
	Lighting	broad daylight		sundown		darkness
	Site visibility	open, no obstructions		some obstructions, generally easy to monitor		multiple obstructions
	Compliance history	None		CN-NEAR / new event	NOEA > 2 years ago	multiple previous NOEAs
	Crowd density	well spread-out		general intermingling but easy movement	mobility difficult	closely-packed / mosh pit
	Security-to-patron ratio	1:~50		1:~200		1: > 500

Glossary

“Agent” refers to a holder of an agent licence who represents products manufactured outside British Columbia. An agent may advertise and promote liquor to licensees, liquor stores and the public, but can only sell liquor from any manufacturer they represent to the Liquor Distribution Branch in a manner authorized by the Liquor Distribution Branch.

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

“The Branch” means the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch, the government agency that administers the Act.

“Community event” includes events such as a festival, sports tournament or concert.

“Inspector” means an inspector of the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch.

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

“Manufacturer” means a person who manufactures liquor (beer, wine, spirits, cider, coolers).

“Sell” includes exchange, offer to sell, and give in consideration of.

“Serve” means to give away, free of charge.

“Service area” means the area within an establishment or event site where liquor may be sold, served and consumed.

“General Manager” means the person appointed by the minister to be responsible for issuing licences and permits, supervising licensees, permittees and the operation of establishments and event sites, and enforcing the Act and regulations

“Permittee” refers to the individual or business holding a Special Event Permit. The permittee is legally responsible for the event and is liable for any contraventions of the Act, regulation and/or terms and conditions.