

Date: April 28, 2014

To: All LCLB Staff
BC Liquor Stores
All Industry Associations
All Local Government, First Nations, and Police Agencies

Re: **Special occasion whole-site licensing; allowing spirits at special occasion events**

Introduction

On January 31, 2014, Parliamentary Secretary, John Yap, announced recommendations for liquor policy change under the B.C. Liquor Policy Review, and the government also announced and supported those recommendations. This Policy Directive implements two of these policy recommendations in relation to public special occasion licensing (SOL). The first is to allow whole-site licensing of public SOLs, eliminating beverage gardens except where in the public interest to impose them. The second is to allow the sale and service of spirits at public SOLs. These changes also involve a few consequential policy changes.

Present policy

Existing Branch policy does not generally permit for entire SOL site licensing. Policy requires SOLs to have barriers clearly defining liquor service areas. Historically, this has been done in practice by creating beverage gardens to control the service of liquor ("major events"). Minors are not permitted inside beverage gardens and the sale and consumption of liquor is confined within the beverage garden. The policy has been applied primarily to outdoor events.

Existing Branch policy states that, except in very limited circumstances, spirit drinks are not permitted at public SOLs with the exception of spirit-based coolers.

New policy

Whole site licensing is generally permitted at public SOLs. For SOL events of less than 500 people ("routine events"), licences will be granted without liquor inspector involvement and beverage gardens will generally not be required. Police or local governments may impose terms and conditions on licences for small events.

Whole site licensing is permitted for major SOL events. Beverage gardens may be imposed if deemed necessary from a public safety perspective.

Approval process for Major SOL events

SOL applicants for major events are required to submit a security plan for review by liquor inspectors. Liquor inspectors will assess the risk to public safety based on factors that include event character, size and duration; patron demographic; lighting; site visibility; licensee compliance history; crowd density; security presence. Upon evaluation of these and other relevant factors, compliance and enforcement management may, in consultation with liquor inspectors, impose beverage gardens.

Details of the manager/liquor inspector approval process will be included in Operational Bulletin 14-01. Liquor inspectors will evaluate overall SOL risk by reference to a risk analysis chart and Excel interactive worksheet, publicly accessible for review: <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/docs-forms/sol-risk-assessment.xls>.

The use of the risk analysis chart and interactive worksheet is a 1 year pilot project, to be reviewed during and at the end of the pilot.

All SOL events are now permitted to sell spirit drinks, but no more than two standard size servings per customer at a time and no greater than 1.5 oz (43ml) per serving.

Licensees will not be permitted to serve shooters, as these are designed for rapid consumption and tend to promote over-consumption and intoxication.

Original signed by:

Douglas Scott
Assistant Deputy Minister and General Manager