



SPECIAL OCCASION
LICENCES

BC LIQUORSTORES
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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

SPECIAL OCCASION LICENCES

What is a Special Occasion Licence?

A Special Occasion Licence (SOL) permits you to serve, sell and consume alcohol at your special event, celebration or community festival. Licences are regulated by the Liquor Control & Licensing Branch and issued by the Liquor Distribution Branch. When you apply for a SOL, you agree to be responsible for the safety and sobriety of your guests. A complete copy of the laws that govern this licence can be found at: www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/lclb.

Planning to serve or sell alcoholic beverages at a special event?

Whether you're hosting a private or public event, plan on being a responsible host.

What is a private special event?

To qualify as a private special event, attendance must be limited to invited guests, members and staff of an organization, or persons to whom advance tickets have been given or sold. If uninvited attendees or members of the general public are allowed to participate, the event is no longer a private special event, but rather a public special event.

A private special event includes:

- A social, cultural, recreational, religious, sporting or community event;
- A tasting event to acquaint the public with products from a winery, brewery or distillery;
- A celebration of a family occasion, including, but not limited to, weddings, christenings, bar mitzvahs or other religious occasions, birthdays or wedding anniversaries. Pre-wedding parties (bachelor and bachelorette party, stag and stagette night/party) **cannot be licensed**; these events must be held in a residence.

What is a public special event?

A public special event is a community or public celebration (community festival, outdoor concert) where anyone may attend. Events are public if they are held in a place open to the public, such as a park, open room in a community centre, business open to the public or outdoor location such as a parking lot. Distilled spirits, other than spirit-based coolers, are not generally permitted. Beer, wine, cider and coolers may be sold.

Promote responsible drinking by ensuring there is a reasonable amount of food and non-alcoholic drinks at your event. Consider offering complimentary, de-alcoholized and non-alcoholic beverages to designated drivers. See BC Liquor Stores free Party Planning Guide, available in stores.

Who applies for the licence?

It is the host's responsibility to apply for a SOL. This could be a member of the family or a close friend applying for a licence for a family occasion, or an individual representing a club, business or group. Event coordinators, caterers or managers cannot apply on the host's behalf. An applicant must be at least 19 years old, a resident of BC, a Canadian citizen or be admitted to Canada for permanent residence.

What are my responsibilities as a licence holder?

Once you have obtained a SOL, it becomes your responsibility to protect guests from any harm that may result from drinking—this is called **Duty of Care**. This includes harm that may occur at the event or elsewhere after the guests have left. If you serve alcohol to someone who becomes impaired, be aware that you may be legally liable for that person's behaviour until that patron gets home or to another place and is able to sober up.

Additionally, if guests appear intoxicated you must not serve or sell them liquor. You have a responsibility and a right under the Liquor Control and Licensing Act to forbid an intoxicated person to enter, or request that they leave the area covered by your SOL. Take steps to ensure that each guest does not harm himself/herself or others.



How do I apply for a SOL?

Please visit the BC Liquor Store nearest you for an application form. To fill out the form you will need the following:

- Date and address of your event;
- Copies of your Serving it Right certificate (any other paid or unpaid managers and all paid servers must obtain a Serving it Right certificate by the date of the event);
- Number of people you expect to attend;
- Hours you intend to operate;
- Amount of alcohol you estimate will be required or sold;
- Local government and/or police department approval, if applicable (see Police Policy page 8).

Return the SOL application form, licence fee and any attachments to the BC Liquor Store manager. It is strongly recommended you apply at least one month in advance of your event (see page 8 for more information on Serving It Right).

What kind of alcohol may I serve?

Liquor for your special event must be bought from a BC Liquor Store or other source approved by the Liquor Distribution Branch—such as a rural agency store, on-site winery or on-site brewery store. If you are holding a public special event, you may only serve or sell beer, wine, cider and coolers. You may not serve or sell spirits (hard liquor) at a public event without obtaining additional authorization from the Liquor Control & Licensing Branch (LCLB).

How much does a licence cost?

Private Special Event	\$25.00 per day
Public Special Event	\$100.00 per day

Guests are not allowed to bring their own liquor to either a private or public special event. Homemade beer or wine (or UBrew/UVin products) may not be served or sold.



Are there any restrictions and/or requirements?

HOURS:

Indoor events—Monday to Sunday

Hours: 9:00am to 2:00am the following day

Outdoor events—Monday to Sunday

Hours: 9:00am to 10:00pm the same day

You may apply for a maximum of two SOLs per month, not exceeding 24 per year. If selling liquor, you must follow the Maximum Liquor Price Schedule (see page 10 of this brochure or download from: www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/lclb). You may not charge more than the amounts listed without special permission from the LCLB.

You are not permitted to offer drink specials.

Advertisements may not indicate in any manner that alcoholic beverages will be available, served or sold at your event. However, if your event is a public special event at which a number of wine, beer or other liquor manufacturers are conducting tastings at one location, the event organizer may advertise the name of the event followed by the names of the participating manufacturers. The area in which liquor is served must be enclosed by a barrier sufficient to confine the sale, service and consumption of liquor to a specified area. If minors are not allowed into the event, all forms of gaming licenced by the BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch are permitted. If minors are permitted, the only gaming you may offer is a ticket raffle.

You can view and download the latest maximum liquor price schedule and SOL Policy Exemption application form at: www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/lclb or call toll-free at 1 866 209 2111.

Serving it Right:

The Responsible Beverage Service Program

If applying as a representative of a club, business or other group, you and any paid or unpaid managers for your event must obtain certification by **Serving It Right: The Responsible Beverage Service Program**, before you apply for a SOL. Only paid servers must complete the Serving it Right program. The purpose of this program is to make people aware of their responsibilities when serving alcohol to guests or patrons. There is a nominal fee and a short test that can be done by correspondence or online. Individuals obtaining a SOL for a private family event are usually not required to complete this program, but if you hire managers (paid or unpaid) or servers, they must each have a Serving It Right certificate. If the person serving the liquor is not being paid, no certificate is required.

Designated Drivers

Ensure a safe ride home for everyone. For more information and to request “get home safe” materials, contact your local ICBC office: www.icbc.com or visit: www.bcliquorstores.com/en/about/socialresponsibility/gethomesafe.

Police Policy

Local government and police approval are needed for all public special events, and may be necessary for some private special events, depending on the policy of your local police agency. Ask the manager of your local BC Liquor Store if your type of private event will need approval. If approval is needed, take your completed application form to the police department and/or local government office for the area where your event will be held.

During your private or public special event, your SOL, approved application form and any letters granting exceptions or additions must be posted in a visible location in the bar area. The SOL is a public document and must be shown to anyone who requests it.

A self-study package for completing Serving It Right is available at BC Liquor Stores. You can also download study materials and complete the test online at: www.servingitright.com. For more information contact go2 at: info@servingitright.com, visit: www.go2hr.ca or call 604 633 9787.

Local police may place additional restrictions or alter the terms and conditions that apply to the licence should they identify potential enforcement concerns. Police and liquor inspectors have the right to enter and inspect the premises while your event is in progress and may suspend a SOL immediately for reasons of public safety.

Are minors allowed at my event?

Yes, persons under 19 years of age are allowed at licensed special events, but must not drink, serve liquor or sell drink tickets. You and any servers are responsible for checking two pieces of ID if anyone appears to be a minor. Primary ID must include a photo with name, signature and date of birth, for example: driver's licence, BC ID card or passport. Secondary ID can include: credit card, CareCard, or Social Insurance Card.

Are there any exceptions?

Yes, you may apply to the Liquor Control & Licensing Branch for special permission to:

- Hold more than two SOLs per month or 24 per year;
- Apply for an SOL if not a Canadian citizen or admitted to Canada for permanent residence;
- Extend the hours of your event;
- Sell spirits (hard liquor) at a public event;
- Charge more than the maximum liquor price schedule if you are holding an event to raise money for a charitable purpose.

Be sure to submit the application for exemptions form at least four weeks in advance of your event.



Special occasion licence—liquor price schedule

The following liquor prices are MAXIMUMS with 12 per cent HST:

SPIRITS

1 oz (28 ml) \$3.00 / \$3.36
1.5 oz (43 ml) \$4.00 / \$4.48

CAN OR BOTTLE OF BEER, CIDER OR COOLER
(up to 355 ml) \$4.00 / \$4.48

BEER, CIDER OR COOLER BY THE GLASS
12 oz (355 ml) \$4.00 / \$4.48

WINE

4 oz glass no more than 100 per cent mark up over purchase price/no more than 100 per cent mark up over purchase price + 12 per cent HST.

The maximum prices are intended to cover the “operating costs” of serving or selling liquor and include the cost of liquor, mix, glasses, ice and taxes. The prices do not include costs such as hall rental, servers, entertainment or security.

The prices are maximum and may only be exceeded if authorized by the Liquor Control & Licensing Branch. If the purpose of the event is to raise funds for charity, you may wish to exceed the prices listed. To do so, you must apply in writing well in advance of the event (at least four weeks prior) by completing the Special Occasion Licences Policy Exemption Application Form (LCLB031), available on the following website: www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/lclb.

HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED? CALCULATOR

number of guests	beer (50%)	wine (30%)	spirits (20%)
12	2	2	1
25	4	3	1
50	9	10	2
100	16	20	3
150	25	30	5
200	33	40	7
250	42	50	8
300	50	60	10

Here are some buying guidelines you may find useful. These are purchasing guidelines only.

You can adapt the amounts per category to suit your guests' and your product preferences.

This table is based on four drinks per person during a three hour event. Beer is calculated based on cases of 12 bottles/cans. Wine is calculated based on 750ml bottles or 6 x 4 oz glasses. Spirits are calculated based on 750ml bottles or 24 drinks.

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* Only organizations with a HST registration number on their Special Occasion Licence may include the HST in the price.

Contacts

Serving It Right

phone 604 633 9798
fax 604 633 9796
email info@servingitright.com
website www.servingitright.com

go2

The resource for people in Tourism

phone 604 633 9787
fax 604 633 9767
email info@go2hr.ca
website www.go2hr.ca

Questions and special requests concerning SOLs

Licensing Administrator

Special Occasion Licences

Liquor Control & Licensing Branch

2nd Floor, 1019 Wharf Street

Victoria, BC V8W 2Y9

phone 1 866 209 2111
in Victoria, call 250 387 1254
website www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/lclb

You may also contact any regional office of the Liquor Control & Licensing Branch. A list of offices is available on the LCLB website at www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/lclb.

You can also visit any BC Liquor Store in person or check out www.bcliqorstores.com for more information and a list of BC Liquor Stores.

This brochure is designed to provide you with a general overview of Special Occasion Licences according to the policies set out by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. The information contained herein represents only a portion of the policy and regulations governing this licence class. At all times, the relevant legislation and approved policy prevails over the contents herein and the General Manager reserves the right to impose terms and conditions upon a licence.

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