

The following information has been prepared by the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) to accompany the "Application for a Retail Liquor Store Licence". These questions and answers are aimed at helping prospective applicants understand some basic requirements. Operating a retail liquor store is subject to the Gaming and Liquor Act, Gaming and Liquor Regulation and Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission policies. For a legal interpretation, please refer to the legislation.

The AGLC is the wholesaler and sole importer of liquor products retailed in Alberta. The AGLC has the authority to grant, suspend and cancel licences for the sale of liquor.

APPLYING FOR A RETAIL LIQUOR STORE LICENCE

1. What is a retail liquor store licence?

It is a legal document from the AGLC which grants the holder the authority to sell beer, spirits and wine at retail in Alberta. It gives the name of the licensee (holder of the licence), name of premises, location of the premises, class of licence, and maximum hours of operation.

2. Will I receive a licence if my application is approved?

Not immediately. Upon approval of your application and supporting documents, your application will receive approval in principle. A retail liquor store licence will be issued to you after your premises is completed (ready to open for business), and you have met all appropriate requirements (e.g., business licence, AGLC inspection, etc.).

3. Who is eligible to apply for a retail liquor store licence?

See the reverse side of the application form for eligibility criteria.

4. How do I apply for a retail liquor store licence?

The "Application for a Retail Liquor Store Licence" and attachments must be completed fully and returned to the AGLC. A non-refundable application fee of \$200 must accompany the application.

5. Will the application fee be returned to me if my application is rejected?

No. This is a one-time processing fee for applications.

6. When will the AGLC let me know whether my application is approved or rejected?

As soon as possible after it is reviewed. If your application is incomplete, you may be asked to provide the additional information before you receive approval or rejection. It may take two weeks for this process to be completed. A licence will not be issued until the building from which liquor will be sold is completed according to your plans which were approved in advance by the AGLC.

7. May I apply for more than one retail liquor store licence?

Yes. The same rules apply as described above for each licence applied for and a separate application and application fee is required for each location.

8. How long will a retail liquor store licence be in effect?

A licence is effective for one year from the date of issue. It must be renewed annually.

9. Is there a licence fee for successful applicants?

Yes. Successful applicants for a retail liquor store licence must pay an annual licence fee of \$700.

10. Will the number of retail liquor stores be limited?

A retail liquor store licence will be granted to anyone who meets the criteria and conditions set forth by the AGLC, including those requiring that municipal approval be granted. The marketplace will ultimately determine how many retail liquor stores may operate successfully.

11. Will there be a restriction on where a retail liquor store may be located?

Municipal bylaws or zoning requirements may prevent a liquor store from operating in a particular location. Check with your local authorities for such information.

12. May I operate a chain of retail liquor stores, using one common name? Using different names?

Yes. An applicant who is approved and receives more than one retail liquor store licence may use the same name for the stores, or different ones for the different locations.

13. Do the conditions allow me to operate a franchise of retail liquor stores?

No. A retail liquor store licence must remain with the applicant, and may not under any circumstances be franchised to other parties.

14. Is a licence transferable to another location (that is, I want to operate more than one retail liquor store, or move from one to another, can I do it under the original licence received)?

No. A licence is required for each location. If, however, you close one liquor store and apply and are approved to open a new liquor store, the AGLC must first be shown compliance with all applicable bylaws and zoning requirements before the licence will be transferred.

15. Are there laws, regulations or policy guidelines which an operator will need to know before opening a retail liquor store?

Yes. To sell liquor, a retailer must be aware of the laws set forth in the Gaming and Liquor Act, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, and policies of the AGLC. As well, there will be local bylaws and regulations which may apply, as well as building, fire, safety, health and other requirements. It is the responsibility of the licensee to be aware of these.

16. How would a successful applicant keep up to date on any changes to the laws, regulations or policy guidelines?

The AGLC issues every retail liquor store licensee a handbook which outlines all relevant AGLC policies. This handbook is updated regularly.

17. Am I responsible to acquire all other business permits or licences needed to operate a retail liquor store in a location?

Yes. The retail liquor store licence is simply authorization from the AGLC to sell liquor at retail. Other conditions by other authorities will apply.

18. What are the permitted hours of operation for a retail liquor store?

A retail liquor store may operate WITHIN the MAXIMUM hours of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. each day. Stores must remain closed on Christmas Day.

19. How much of the retail liquor store's business must be liquor sales?

The significant part of the business must be directed to the sale of liquor (at least 90 percent).

20. Can a retail liquor store sell non-liquor products?

The retail liquor store, at its discretion, may sell limited non-liquor products. These include: soft drinks, juices and waters (mixes); de-alcoholized beers, wines and coolers; draught beer and wine containers; disposable drink containers; glassware (beer mugs, wine glasses, shot glasses); ice buckets; cocktail shakers; pour spouts; stir sticks; bottle openers and corkscrews; and liquor related books, magazines, videos.

Such products are restricted to those listed, to ensure a retail liquor store does not take on the appearance of a convenience store.

21. Can a retail liquor store sell only one type of product, such as wine, instead of all three types (beer, spirits and wine), or any combination of two types of products?

Yes, a retail liquor store may sell only one or two types of product rather than all three.

22. At what price will a retail liquor store purchase its liquor from the AGLC?

It will purchase liquor at wholesale prices, which are published regularly in a Liquor Wholesale Price List.

23. What is the minimum case quantity to be eligible for the wholesale price?

To purchase liquor at the wholesale or "wholesale equivalent" price, a minimum order of 25 cases must be delivered. For picking up orders at the Connect Logistics warehouse in St. Albert, a minimum of 25 cases must be ordered.

24. Can lesser quantities be ordered?

Lesser quantities may only be purchased from another retail liquor store at the price(s) to be negotiated between the parties.

25. Is there a maximum or minimum price at which the retail liquor store must sell its liquor?

No. The retailer may sell product at whatever price he or she feels is appropriate.

26. Can a retail liquor store order a product NOT on a list of available products?

Yes. Arrangements may be made through a Liquor Agency as detailed in number 27.

27. Will special order products cost me more than products carried by the AGLC?

No. All products will be sold to the retail liquor store at the wholesale price; however, the retail liquor store is responsible for order placement, payment and delivery through an agent registered with the AGLC.

28. Are there any restrictions on who a retail liquor store may sell liquor to?

Yes. This is specified in the application. For example, liquor may NOT be sold to minors and intoxicated persons.

29. When would a retail liquor store have to pay for liquor purchases from the AGLC?

Payment will have to be made at the time of purchase.

30. Is there a limit to the size of a retail liquor store?

The retailer will need to determine whether the size of the location will fit his or her overall marketing strategy, including meeting the demands of the target market. In the metropolitan areas of Calgary and Edmonton, retail liquor stores must be a minimum of 92.9 square metres (1,000 square feet).

31. Some businesses offer delivery of liquor. Can a retail liquor store provide this service also?

Yes.

32. Will the AGLC offer a retail liquor store a line of credit or other financial arrangements?

No. Any financial arrangements, including a line of credit, must be made with a financial institution.

33. Can the retail liquor store charge a fee to sell special event licences for private functions?

Yes, it may charge an administration fee of up to \$2 per special event licence sold (plus GST) in addition to the cost of the special event licence, which is \$10 for a Special Event Licence - Private Non-Sale and \$25 for a Special Event Licence - Private Resale (GST is not assessed against the face value of the licence).

34. Will there be any regular reporting requirements (for example, inventory data, actual sales information)?

No. However, sales information must be kept orderly for auditing by the AGLC.

35. Will a retail liquor store need approval to make renovations to the store later on?

Yes. Any significant changes in the level or actual service(s) provided, or major alterations in the building design or structure, should be discussed with the AGLC in advance.

36. Are there rules as to how or what I can advertise in the media (e.g., newspaper, flyer, outdoor signs, etc.)?

Yes. These rules are detailed in the handbook.

37. What are the conditions, if any, of selling a retail liquor store?

A prospective owner must apply for a retail liquor store licence before he or she may operate the store. Any other change in the ownership status of the store must be approved in advance by the AGLC.

38. Does an AGLC inspector or auditor have the authority to check my sales records?

Yes.

ENQUIRIES

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