

# Liquor Control and Licensing Enforcement Process

## INFORMATION FOR LIQUOR LICENSEES

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### Contravention Notice

If a liquor inspector believes that you or your staff are contravening the Act, its Regulations or the terms and conditions of your licence, the inspector must issue a Contravention Notice to you, that identifies the alleged contravention.

The inspector will then review the evidence and circumstances of the contravention in conjunction with the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch's file for your establishment. Based on that review, the inspector will decide whether to recommend that the general manager take enforcement action against you, as the licensee.

If the inspector does not recommend enforcement action, he or she will keep the Contravention Notice in the branch's file on your establishment, and may require you to attend a Compliance Meeting.

### Compliance Meeting

A compliance meeting is a meeting between you and the inspector – and possibly others, such as members of your staff, local police, government and fire officials.

The purpose of the meeting is to promote voluntary compliance with the liquor licensing rules and to assist you in anticipating, and creating solutions for, potential problems. The inspector will prepare a written record of what is discussed including any procedures you intend to put in place to deal with the problem, and when they will come into effect. Once you and the inspector have signed it, you will receive a copy, and a second copy will be placed in your establishment's file.

Compliance meetings are not a required step before the branch takes enforcement action.

#### Please note:

As a licensee, you are legally responsible for understanding and complying with the requirements of the Act, its Regulations and the terms and conditions of your licence, and for any contraventions committed against your licence.

You are also responsible for making sure your employees follow B.C.'s liquor laws and the terms and conditions of your licence, even when you are not on site.

As the licensee, you are responsible for any contraventions against your licence.

### Notice of Enforcement Action

If a liquor inspector recommends enforcement action, and his or her regional manager concurs, you will receive a Notice of Enforcement Action. The Notice of Enforcement Action will include the details of the allegation, the proposed penalty, why the branch is recommending enforcement action, and the reasons for recommending this particular penalty.

You have the option of disputing the branch's allegations at an enforcement hearing or signing a waiver notice.

### Waiver

Signing a waiver means that you

- agree that the contravention occurred,
- accept the penalty proposed in the Notice of Enforcement Action,
- waive the opportunity for an enforcement hearing, and
- agree that the contravention and penalty will form part of the compliance history of the licence and the licensee.

You may sign a waiver at any time prior to the hearing.

### Pre-hearing Conference

After receiving the Notice of Enforcement Action, you will be asked to participate in a pre-hearing telephone conference conducted by the branch's registrar of enforcement hearings. At the pre-hearing conference, the registrar will:

- obtain your response to the allegations and determine if an enforcement hearing is required
- clarify the issues that will be addressed at the enforcement hearing
- identify and discuss the evidence that both you and the branch plan to present at the enforcement hearing (this includes the names of any witnesses who will testify on your or the branch's behalf)
- arrange for the branch and you to exchange copies of any documents or other evidence that will be introduced at the hearing
- explain the enforcement hearing process
- set a date for the enforcement hearing.

If you do not participate in the pre-hearing conference, you may lose the opportunity for an oral hearing, and the general manager may make a decision based on the written submissions only.

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## Enforcement Hearing

Enforcement hearings may be conducted in-person, via teleconference, written submission, or any combination of these.

At an enforcement hearing, an adjudicator, who is a delegate of the general manager, will consider the evidence and argument presented by you and the branch. The adjudicator will decide whether the alleged contravention(s) occurred and what enforcement action, if any, is warranted. The adjudicator issues a written decision several weeks after the hearing.

### Please note:

You may represent yourself at a hearing, be represented by a lawyer or you may be represented by someone with written authority to act on your behalf.

## Possible Enforcement Action

If the adjudicator decides the contravention occurred, they may

- suspend the liquor licence for a period of time
- impose a monetary penalty
- cancel a liquor licence
- impose, rescind or amend the terms and conditions of a licence, and
- order a licensee to transfer a licence.

If the adjudicator finds that either a licence suspension or monetary penalty is warranted, they may not impose a penalty less than the minimums set out in Schedule 4 of the Regulation. They may impose higher penalties when it is in the public interest to do so. They are not bound by the penalties proposed in the Notice of Enforcement Action.

The type of enforcement action imposed will depend on a number of factors, including the nature of the contravention, the circumstances of the contravention, your establishment's compliance history, and your compliance history as a licensee.

Any enforcement action imposed will form part of the compliance history of the licence and the licensee.

## Serving Liquor While Under Suspension

If the enforcement process results in your [liquor-primary or licensee retail store licence](#) being suspended, your establishment must close.

If your [food-primary licence](#) is suspended, your restaurant may remain open, but you must not serve liquor during the suspension period.

Failure to abide by your suspension is a serious contravention that could lead to an extended licence suspension, cancellation or transfer of your liquor licence.

## Judicial Review

If you are dissatisfied with an enforcement hearing decision, you may apply to the B.C. Supreme Court for a judicial review.

## Contact Information:

Liquor Control and Licensing Branch

Phone: 250 387-1254 (Victoria)

1 866 209 2111 (toll free number)

Email: [lclb.lclb@gov.bc.ca](mailto:lclb.lclb@gov.bc.ca)

Web: [www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb)



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Public Safety  
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