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## Licenses for Retail Sale of Alcohol Beverages

### Alcohol Beverage Laws

#### Fact Sheet 3101

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This fact sheet provides information about licenses required for the retail sale of alcohol beverages in Wisconsin. Licenses are granted by municipalities (cities, villages, or towns).

#### Class A Licenses (Liquor Stores, Grocery Stores, Convenience Stores)

Municipalities may issue a Class A license, which allows the retail sale of alcohol beverages in original packages for consumption **off the retailer's licensed premises**.

- **Class "A" License** – allows the retail sale of fermented malt beverages (beer)
- **"Class A" License** – allows the retail sale of intoxicating liquor (distilled spirits and wine, including alcoholic cider)

#### Class B Licenses (Taverns, Restaurants, Hotels, Resorts)

Municipalities may issue a Class B license, which allows the retail sale of alcohol beverages for consumption **on or off the retailer's licensed premises**, as follows:

- **Class "B" License** – allows the retail sale of fermented malt beverages (beer) for consumption on or off the licensed premises
- **"Class B" License** – allows the retail sale of intoxicating liquor (distilled spirits and wine, including alcoholic cider) for consumption on the licensed premises

**Note:** A municipality may also allow "Class B" licensees to make retail sales of intoxicating liquor for consumption off the licensed premises. Check with your municipality to see if this is allowed.

#### Temporary Class B Licenses

Municipalities may issue temporary Class "B" (beer) licenses and temporary "Class B" (wine) licenses for the retail sale of alcohol beverages at a picnic or similar gathering of limited duration. Temporary licenses may only be issued to the following qualified organizations:

- Bona fide clubs
- State, county, or local fair associations or agricultural societies
- Churches, lodges, or societies that have been in existence for at least six months prior to the date of application
- Posts of veterans organizations
- Chambers of commerce or similar civic or trade organizations organized under ch. 181, Wis. Stats.

**Note:** For profit businesses are ineligible to hold a temporary retail alcohol beverage license.

## Class C Licenses

Municipalities may issue a "Class C" license, which allows the retail sale of wine by the glass or in an opened original container for consumption on the licensed premises.

## 2023 Act 73 Changes

All *retail licenses* for **producers** (breweries, distilleries, and wineries) expired on May 1, 2024 (the effective date of the new law) and cannot be renewed or re-issued. However, brewpubs are not impacted by the changes in Act 73 relating to municipal licensing. Municipalities will continue to issue brewpub permittees Class "B" and "Class B" liquor licenses as appropriate.

All producers will be authorized to sell products they make at their production premises, or in some cases, at their previously licensed retail location, as part of their state-issued *production permit*.

- Depending on the production volume of alcohol beverages, producers can obtain approval for up to three off-site, full-service retail locations in addition to their production premises under the new law. These new approvals are **not** retail licenses. They are authorizations granted as part of their state-issued production permit. The off-site full-service retail locations require municipal approval.

For more details about full-service retail sales see [Common Questions: 2023 Act 73 Full-Service Retail Sales for Producers](#).

## Questions?

If you are unable to find an answer to your question on the division's website, you may email, write, or call the division.

<b>Website. . .</b>	<a href="https://revenue.wi.gov/pages/AlcoholBeverage/home.aspx">revenue.wi.gov/pages/AlcoholBeverage/home.aspx</a>
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