



SPECIAL OCCASION LICENCES

online!

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

SPECIAL OCCASION LICENCES

Special Occasion Licences (SOL) are available to event hosts who wish to provide temporary or infrequent liquor service at events such as family gatherings, private functions, community festivals and manufacturer tastings.

A Special Occasion Licence permits the host to serve or sell liquor at an event in accordance with BC's liquor laws and regulations. Event hosts are considered liquor licensees and are responsible for the safety of their guests.

Who needs an SOL?

In British Columbia, a Special Occasion Licence is required for anyone planning to:

- Sell liquor at any location that is not licensed
- Serve or sell liquor in a public space

An SOL is not required if your event is hosted within a private residence or a licensed establishment.



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.

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Now Apply **Online!**

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Convenient

- Online access from anywhere
- Apply anytime – this site is available 24/7
- Keep track of applications and get instant notification when approved
- Help is available 24/7 and is just a phone call or click away

Quick

- One application – no more deciding which forms you need to fill out
- Save time – no more trips to the liquor store, police office or municipal hall for approval

Simple

- Step-by-step guide – no more guessing what you need to fill out
- Easy-to-use tools – figure out what you'll be serving and how much you need before shopping at BC Liquor Stores

Secure & Transparent

- Secure online payment – your information is safe and confidential
- Know what you're paying – fees are broken down for each of your events
- Upload attachments securely and confidentially



Most SOL applications can be approved instantly.

All events over 500 guests require police and liquor inspector review. Some smaller events may require review from police and/or the LCLB's licensing division.

SPECIAL OCCASION LICENCE

For Public and Private Events (e.g. Weddings, Tastings and Community Festivals):

If you want to serve liquor in a public place or sell liquor anywhere, you will need either a private or public Special Occasion Licence. Here's what you need to know:

- individuals are only eligible to apply for a private family Special Occasion Licence for family-related events such as weddings or family reunions.
- Non-profit organizations may apply for either a private or public Special Occasion Licence for an event they are hosting.
- Businesses or event planners are generally not eligible to apply for a Special Occasion Licence.

Private Family Special Event

A private family special occasion is limited to family & friends.

The occasion must be a family event such as a wedding, birthday party, anniversary or family reunion.

Private Special Event

A private special occasion is an event hosted by a group or organization that is limited to attendance by:

- An organization's members or staff
- Invited guests or ticket holders (tickets must be sold or given away before the event begins)

This occasion may be social, cultural, recreational, religious, sporting or community event, or a tasting to acquaint people with the product of a winery, brewery or distillery.

Public Special Event

A public special occasion is open to anyone who wishes to participate or buy a ticket, either at the door or in advance of the event.

The occasion may be:

- a community or public event (such as a community festival or outdoor concert)
- a tasting event so a liquor manufacturer can showcase their product, or
- any event that contributes to the cultural or social life of the community

If you are planning a **public special event** in the City of Vancouver you will need approval from the **Vancouver Police Department Emergency and Operational Planning Unit**. Please read the information on their website – vancouver.ca/police/organization/operations/emergency-operations-planning/operational-planning.html and contact the **Emergency Operational Planning Unit** for an application form to obtain approval (contact information is on their website).

BASIC RULES FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION LICENCE

You must follow British Columbia's liquor laws. The laws which govern commercial bar owners — such as not selling liquor to minors or to persons who are intoxicated — also apply to you.

Eligibility

The host of the special event (either an individual or a designated representative from a club or other group) must apply for the Special Occasion Licence. Caterers, paid or unpaid managers or event coordinators cannot apply on the host's behalf.

An applicant for a Special Occasion Licence **must be at least 19 years old** and either:

- a resident of B.C.
- a Canadian Citizen or lawfully admitted to Canada under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada) for permanent residence, or
- for any other person, have received approval to obtain a Special Occasion Licence by receiving an online approval from the **Liquor Control and Licensing Branch**.

Licence Costs

Licence Costs are as follows:

- Private Special Occasion: \$25.00 per day
- Public Special Occasion: \$100.00 per day

Serving It Right

If you are applying as a representative of a club, business or other group, you and any paid managers or servers for your event must complete **Serving it Right: The Responsible Beverage Service Program**, before you can apply for a Special Occasion Licence.

If you are applying as an individual (not attached to a group), you will most likely not be required to complete Serving It Right, but if you hire any managers or servers, they must each have a Serving It Right certificate by the time you hold your event.

Sales and Service

You must purchase your liquor from a BC Liquor Store or another source approved by the Liquor Distribution Branch.

You may only provide (serve but not sell) home-made beer, cider or wine or UBrew/UVin (Ferment-on-Premises) products under a private family Special Occasion Licence. You may not allow the people attending the event to bring their own liquor, at either a private or a public special event.

If you are selling liquor at your event, you must follow the **Maximum Liquor Price Schedule** — you are not allowed to charge more than the amounts listed on the schedule without special authorization from the **Liquor Control and Licensing Branch**.



Duty of Care

Once you have a Special Occasion Licence, if you serve alcohol to someone who becomes impaired as a result, you may be held legally liable for that person's subsequent behaviour.

As a licensee, you have a “duty of care” — which means you must protect patrons at your event and others from harm that may be associated with the activity of drinking. This includes harm which may occur on the premises of your event, as well as harm which may occur after the patron has left the premises.

Minors

Minors (under age 19) are generally allowed at licensed special events, but may not drink — or serve — liquor, or sell drink tickets. Minors are not allowed in public beer gardens.

Your servers must ask to see two pieces of identification if they believe the person ordering a drink is underage.

Intoxicated Persons

You must not sell or serve liquor to an intoxicated person, or allow an intoxicated person to remain in the area covered by your Special Occasion Licence.

If a person becomes intoxicated, you must take reasonable steps to ensure that the person does not harm himself/herself or others.



Local Government/First Nations and Police Approval

Police approval may be required for an event if it is over a certain size or for later than normal hours. Please check with your local police authority to determine whether they will want to review your application.

You will be advised if police approval is required once you submit your application. You will also be provided with the contact information for your local police department. Please try to submit your application well in advance – at least 14 days – to provide enough time to review.

Hours

Indoor events may be held between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m. the following day; **outdoor** events may be held between and 9:00 a.m. 10:00 p.m. the same day.

Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages

You must supply a reasonable amount of food and non-alcoholic beverages at your event.

Number of Licences

You may not apply for more than three Special Occasion Licences per month, or a maximum of 24 per year, without special authorization from the **Liquor Control and Licensing Branch**.



Where Can You Serve Liquor?

The SOL application form asks you to describe the designated area where liquor will be consumed. Once approved, that designated area is the only area that is licensed for the service of liquor.

If your event is outside or is using only part of a large building or hall, the liquor service area must be enclosed by a barrier sufficient to confine the sale, service and consumption of liquor to the specified area.

Advertising

Advertisements may not indicate in any manner that alcoholic beverages will be available, served or sold at your event. You are permitted to state "Refreshments are Available" in your advertising.

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 name of the event followed by the names of the participating manufacturers may be advertised.

Gambling

Only gambling licensed by the BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch is permitted if minors are not allowed into the event. If minors are present, gambling is limited to licensed raffles. No unlicensed gambling is permitted.

Posting Your SOL Licence

Your Special Occasion Licence, and any letters granting exemptions or imposing additional terms and conditions on the licence must be posted in a visible location in the bar area. The SOL is a public document and must be shown to anyone on request.

Receipts for the liquor which has been purchased and the approved security plan (if applicable) must be kept on site for inspection by a police officer or liquor inspector.

Penalties for Liquor Infractions

Special occasion licence holders are subject to the same enforcement penalties for liquor infractions as commercial bar owners. Licence holders are responsible for any contraventions which occur while the licence is in effect, and LCLB may commence enforcement action within 6 months after the event has ended.

When you host an event under a special occasion licence, you cannot:

- sell or serve liquor to minors
- allow someone who is intoxicated to enter or remain at your event
- serve a guest to the point of intoxication
- permit unlawful activity
- sell illicit liquor (product that has been acquired other than through an approved LDB outlet such as a government liquor store) and
- allow someone who has a weapon to enter or remain at your event (if you suspect someone has a weapon, notify the police immediately).

In addition, you must ensure:

- your event does not disturb nearby residents and businesses, and
- liquor inspectors and police immediate are given immediate access to your event, and to any documents related to your Special Occasion Licence.

For a complete list of contraventions and penalties see **Schedule 4 of the Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation**.



EXCEPTIONS TO SPECIAL OCCASION LICENCE RULES

You may apply to the **Liquor Control and Licensing Branch** to:

- hold more than three Special Occasion Licences per month or 24 per year
- extend the hours for your event, and/or
- charge more than the **Special Occasion Licence — Liquor Price Schedule, (LCLB031a)**; the branch will only approve a price increase if you are holding an event to raise money for a charitable purpose

Please note:

A charitable purpose is defined in the **Liquor Control and Licensing Act** as “the relief of poverty, the advancement of education, the advancement of religion and other purposes beneficial to the community”. We may require proof of association with the charity or cause before allowing the exception.

To apply for an exception, please fill out the online application for your Special Occasion Licence. You may be asked for additional information if your event requires a policy exemption. Once your application is submitted it will be reviewed by the **Liquor Control and Licensing Branch**. Please submit your application at least four weeks before your event.

For more information about exceptions, please call the **SOL Help Line** toll free at **1-855-999-7656**.

EVENT SECURITY

Security Plan:

If 500 or more people are expected to attend your event, you will be required to submit a security plan with your online application. Your security plan must be approved by the **Liquor Control and Licensing Branch** before you apply for the SOL. The plan must set out how you will control crowds, prevent minors from accessing liquor and prevent over consumption. See the Branch website for a sample security plan.

Door Security:

If you choose to have door staff (paid or volunteer) who will be responsible for preventing the entrance of intoxicated, unruly or disruptive persons and for removing persons who become intoxicated, unruly or disruptive or who present a safety risk to others, they must be licensed. Servers, bartenders or other individuals who check identification or count patrons to ensure that the event is not overcrowded but are not expected to perform tasks associated with the security of the event are not considered to be security workers.

Individuals providing door security must be licensed under the **BC Security Services Act**. Please see the Contacts/More Information section at the end of this booklet or go to www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/securityindustry/legislation/docs/licensingpolicy.pdf.

ROLE OF POLICE AND LIQUOR INSPECTORS

Police and liquor inspectors have the right to enter and inspect the premises while your event is in progress. They may suspend an SOL immediately for reasons of public safety, seize illicit liquor and/or take other measures where a licensee has contravened the conditions of the licence

LIQUOR GUIDELINES

What Kind of Liquor May You Serve?

Private Events: If you are holding a private event, you may sell or serve beer, wine, cider and spirits.

Public Events: If you are holding a public event, you may only serve or sell beer, wine, cider, coolers and spirits. Shooters are not permitted.



How Much May You Serve At One Time?

To help prevent over service and intoxication of patrons and guests, limits are imposed on the amount of liquor that can be served at one time.

Maximum single serving size:

Spirits	2 drinks, each containing up to 1.5oz (43 ml)
Packaged Beer, Cider or Cooler	2 standard sized cans or bottles
Beer, Cider or Cooler	By the glass – up to 24 oz (680 ml)
Wine	By the glass – up to 10 oz (285 ml) By the full bottle only if 2 or more people are sharing and having food.

Maximum Liquor Price Schedule

The Special Occasion Licence is not intended to provide an opportunity to make money – it is to allow liquor service at a special event.

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

Only organizations with a GST registration number may include the GST in the price. PST must be included in the sale price.

Spirits

1 oz (28 ml)	\$4.00 / \$4.20 (incl. GST)
1.5 oz (43 ml)	\$5.00 / \$5.25 (incl. GST)

Can Or Bottle Of Beer, Cider Or Cooler

Per can or bottle	\$5.00 / \$5.25 (incl. GST)
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Beer, Cider Or Cooler By The Glass

12 oz (355 ml)	\$5.00 / \$5.25 (incl. GST)
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Wine	\$7.00 / \$7.35 (incl. GST)
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HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED? CALCULATOR

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 750 ml bottles or 6 x 4 oz glasses. Spirits are calculated based on 750 ml bottles or 24 drinks.

How Much Liquor Do You Need?

You need to calculate how much liquor you will need for your event and record this amount on your online application. The amount you record on the form becomes the maximum amount of liquor you can have at the event.

The above table is a guide to help you calculate the amount of liquor you need for your event based on four drinks per person during a three hour event. You will need less liquor for shorter events and may need more liquor for longer ones. Police and/or local governments may require that you use a different rate of consumption.

CONTACTS & MORE INFORMATION

www.solo.bclddb.com/

SOLO Help Line at 1-855-999-7656

Liquor Distribution Branch/BC Liquor Stores Website

For store locations and other information, please visit:
www.bcliqorstores.com

Liquor Control and Licensing Branch Website

<http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/apply/special/index.htm>

Serving It Right

A self-study package for completing Serving It Right is available at Government Liquor Stores. You can also download study materials and complete the test at:
www.servingitright.com

For more information contact go2 at:
info@servingitright.com, visit www.go2hr.ca
or call 604 633-9798.

The Laws that Govern Special Occasion Licences:

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/resources/index.htm

Security Industry Licensing (for door and security staff)

Ministry of Justice and Attorney General
www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/securityindustry, or call
Toll Free: 855 587 0185
Victoria: 250 387 6121
Vancouver: 604 660 2421
Toll Free – call Enquiry BC: 1 800 663 7867

This brochure is designed to provide you with a general overview of Special Occasion Licences. The information in this booklet is only a portion of the policy and regulations issued by the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch governing this category of liquor licence. At all times, the relevant legislation and policy prevails over the contents herein and the General Manager of the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch may impose terms and conditions upon a licence.

BC LIQUORSTORES

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