
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.

Class C Licenses (Wine Sold at Restaurants)

Municipalities may issue a "Class C" license, which allows the retail sale of wine for consumption on the licensed premises of a restaurant, if the sale of alcohol beverages accounts for less than 50 percent of gross receipts.

Any Questions?

If you are unable to find an answer to your question about types of alcohol beverage licenses on the department's website, you may email, write, or call the department.

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