



Q&A:

New Policy for Licensed Patios and Separation of Premises

What is changing?

The AGLC is updating the Licensee Handbook so that it is easier for businesses to build, expand or renovate licensed patios, and to connect licensed rooms to other licensed or unlicensed rooms.

How exactly is patio policy changing?

In the past, there were some restrictions that made it hard for businesses to offer the type of patio service they wanted for their customers. Now they may:

- Provide customers with patio access from off the street, rather than only directly from inside the licensed establishment.
- Establish a patio enclosure that fits with the venue and neighbourhood, rather than the previously mandatory three-foot-high enclosure.
- Choose their own patio size, conditional upon municipal requirements including patron occupancy limits.
- Open a sidewalk patio. These have been permitted since 2014, but it was not reflected in the AGLC's written policy.

How exactly is other policy changing?

Some businesses, like restaurants and lounges, often have one room that is licensed as Minors Prohibited or Minors Allowed, and other rooms that are not. In the past, there were strict requirements on how these rooms were separated by walls or other means. The policy is now less restrictive for businesses. Now they may:

- Connect licensed premises and unlicensed or licensed areas without the need for one-meter-high separations.
- Have a permanent opening between two licensed premises when they are operated by the same licensee.
- Offer direct access to a Minors Prohibited premises from another licensed area.
- Define a licensed premises using permanent or portable barriers such as planters, ropes, railings or similar items, except in the case of MP premises.
- Build without full height solid walls, except in the case of Minors Prohibited premises.

When do the changes come into effect?

The new policies are currently in effect as of July 9, 2017.

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Why is the policy changing?

The AGLC has ongoing conversations with its stakeholders and is in the process of delivering several updates to liquor policy in an effort to support industry through modernized liquor regulations. The AGLC is committed to helping Alberta's hospitality industry by cutting red tape and making it easier for businesses to embrace opportunities.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to patios and buildings, and that's why policy is changing. Licensed venues are often found in buildings that have unique layout challenges. There is also an interest in having patios better blend into neighbourhoods. The new policy helps businesses accomplish this.

Who does this impact?

Restaurants, lounges, bars and other businesses that are licensed to serve liquor will benefit from these policy changes. From a regulatory perspective, this impacts Class A, B and C licensees.

Will Albertans notice any change?

Once licensees have some time to take advantage of these policy changes in their renovations or construction, Albertans may notice that it is more convenient to move between different rooms within restaurants and lounges. They may find it more convenient to find and access licensed patios.

Is this making it easier for minors to access liquor?

No. The new policies make it more convenient for adult Albertans to enjoy their time in a licensed establishment, while still protecting minors. As always, employees in the liquor service industry must take responsible service training through the AGLC. This training is run under the names ProServe for service staff, and ProTect for security staff.