

MANITOBA'S NEW LIQUOR REGULATIONS

Highlights of the new liquor regulations include:

- More options for consumers and less red tape for business:
 - streamlining categories of liquor licences from 12 to three – service, sales and manufacturing;
 - increasing convenience by allowing customers to order liquor without food in dining rooms, as long as half the dining room is available for food service or serving food, and eliminating requirements that restaurants maintain a food-to-liquor sales ratio;
 - expanding consumer choice by eliminating outdated food-service and menu requirements, recognizing the diversity of dining options available in and around Manitoba;
 - encouraging entertainment and local talent by creating a new licence category for small live entertainment venues with no requirement for an on-site kitchen and hot food service, allowing for food to be brought in from off-site patrons;
 - offering more options for special events: as part of Manitoba's Year of Music, restaurants and hotels can apply to operate as a live entertainment venue up to 12 times during 2014. (Applications will be accepted by the LGA beginning April 1.);
 - providing more flexibility for special authorizations to extend hours of service in cases of events of community, municipal, provincial and national significance, as was done for the Olympic men's hockey gold-medal game;
 - allowing customers the option of enjoying a drink at licensed hair and beauty salons and spas and options for art galleries that wish to obtain a liquor licence, under flexible food-service options that fit their business model;
 - allowing new options to hotel beverage rooms that want to diversify to operate like dining rooms and host day-time family-oriented events focused on food service before 9 p.m.;
 - establishing a single online application for socials for liquor and raffle permits and eliminating outdated bottle limits and quotas, with the focus on enforcing the responsible service and consumption of alcohol at social events rather than on counting bottles;
 - creating a brand new licence category called Unique Hospitality Experience to facilitate exceptional and distinct business proposals that cannot be accommodated within another licence category; large multi-use complexes will no longer have to deal with a variety of different licences for their different spaces, but can get one licence that will be flexible to their needs to maximize what they can offer to their community;

- expanding consumer choice by eliminating holiday sale and service restrictions to reflect Manitoba's cultural diversity (Remembrance Day restrictions will remain in place); and
- standardizing hours of operation (operators will set their own hours within these established standards):
 - service licensees – 9 a.m. to 2 a.m., seven days a week;
 - sales licensees (Liquor Marts, liquor vendors and specialty wine stores) – 8 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week; and
 - hotel beer vendors – 8 a.m. to 2:30 a.m., seven days a week.
 - Note: Municipalities retain the ability to place restrictions on hours and days of sales and service within their communities.
- Enhanced public safety and community input:
 - strengthening police powers and licensee obligations to address community safety concerns specific to liquor sales, service and consumption and tangential issues such as bootlegging, gang colours and threats of violence;
 - improving citizen input into liquor applications and community concerns including dispute resolution and mediation processes at the administrative level;
 - including new and/or updated sections that are intended to address chronic problems with 'party houses';
 - clarifying the long-standing practice that all required municipal zoning and approvals are a pre-condition of obtaining a liquor licence and that observing local bylaws is a condition of retaining a liquor licence;
 - simplifying the language used in the legislation and regulation easier to make it easier for licensees and the public to read and understand; and
 - eliminating the Liquor Licensing Board to speed licensing, complaint and hearing processes.