



SPECIAL OCCASION  
**LICENCES**

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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.

## EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SPECIAL OCCASION LICENCES

A Special Occasion Licence (SOL) permits you to serve, sell and consume alcohol at your special event, celebration or community festival.

The SOL is regulated by the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch and issued by the Liquor Distribution Branch.

When you apply for a SOL, you agree to be responsible for the safety and sobriety of your guests.

Apply for a special occasion licence at any government liquor store.

The person completing the application form must be at least 19 years old and a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada. If this is not the case please see the Exemptions section below.

*Note: Event organizers, caterers or managers are not eligible to apply for a SOL on behalf of the host of the event.*

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## What Type of Special Occasion Licence is Right for Your Event?

There are two types of SOL – one for private special occasions and one for public special occasions.

### What is a private special occasion?

A private special occasion is an event where attendance is limited to invited guests, members and staff of an organization, or persons to whom advance tickets have been given or sold (tickets must not be sold at the door).

If uninvited attendees or members of the general public are allowed to participate, the event is no longer a private event, but rather a public special event.

### What is a public special occasion?

A public special occasion is an event where anyone may attend, either by obtaining a ticket at the door or simply by entering the event location. Events are considered public if they are held in a place open to the public.

**Family Event:** An individual who is a member of the family or a close friend of the family may apply for a SOL for a family event where the guests are family and friends only (not open to the public). These events celebrate an aspect of family life, including, but not limited to: weddings, anniversaries, bar mitzvahs, christenings, wakes, family celebrations of special events such as a wedding or baby shower, birthdays, retirement and family reunions. Family events are always private special occasions.

Pre-wedding parties of a kind commonly known as bachelor and bachelorette parties (e.g., stags and stagettes) are not eligible for a special occasion licence.

If you are applying as the host of a Family Event, please complete the Family Event – Special Occasion Licence Application form.

**All Other Events:** For all other events, a club, society, company or other type of organization must apply for the SOL and be the host of the event (individuals are not eligible to apply). The representative of the organization applying for the SOL may be asked for proof of authority to fill out the application for the host organization.



If you are applying as the representative of a club, society, organization, company, etc., please complete the Special Occasion Licence Application form.

An organization may apply for an SOL for:

**Community Events:** These include community events such as music, cultural and other festivals, sporting events, boating regattas, and community celebrations such as Canada Day festivities.

**Business-Host Events:** These include client appreciation events, staff Christmas parties, receptions for industry representatives, etc. These must be private events, there must be no cost to attend and alcohol may not be sold.

**Liquor Tasting Events:** Hosted either by a community organization or manufacturer(s) or agent(s), liquor tasting events give people the opportunity to sample several types of product, for example, wine tastings.

There is a fee and a short test that can be done by correspondence or online.

If applying as a representative of a club, business or other group, you must obtain a certificate number issued by Serving It Right before you apply for an SOL. You must record your Serving It Right number on the SOL application form.

Individuals applying for an SOL for a family event are usually not required to take this training program.

All paid or unpaid managers looking after an SOL event must complete the training program. All paid servers must complete the Serving It Right program. Servers who are not being paid do not need to take the training.

Please see the Contacts & More Information section at the end of this booklet for information about how to obtain the Serving It Right training.

### Minors

Persons under 19 years of age are allowed at licensed special events (other than in beer gardens or at tasting events), but must not drink, serve liquor, or sell liquor or drink tickets.

Checking ID: You are not permitted to serve liquor to anyone under 19 years of age. You, your managers and your servers are responsible for ensuring that minors do not access liquor at your event.

### When checking the age of a guest or patron you must ask for two pieces of ID:

The first piece of identification must be issued by a government agency (e.g. a passport or driver's licence), and include the person's name, signature, birth date and picture.

The second piece of identification must include the holder's name (e.g. a credit card, Social Insurance Card or Care Card), and include the person's signature and/or picture.

If the person cannot produce two pieces of acceptable identification, you must not serve them liquor.

## Important Information for All Types of Events

### Police and Local Government/First Nations Approval

For most public events, both police and local government/First Nations approval is required in order to obtain an SOL. For most private events, only police approval is required. Ask the manager of a Government Liquor Store in the area where your event is to be held what approvals are required for your event.

If required, take the application form to the local government/First Nation and/or police for the area where your event will be held to obtain approval. (In some cases this may take a few days and require payment of a fee.)

The police may place additional restrictions on or alter the terms and conditions that apply to the licence should they identify potential enforcement concerns.

### Serving it Right: The Responsible Beverage Service Program

Serving It Right is a brief course in safe liquor service. Its purpose is to make people aware of their responsibilities when serving alcohol to guests or patrons.



## Event Security

### Security Plan:

If 500 or more people are expected to attend your event, a security plan must be submitted to the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch. Your security plan must be approved by the 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 and how to submit your 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](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/securityindustry/legislation/docs/licensingpolicy.pdf).

## 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 and coolers. Under very limited circumstances, you may receive permission to serve or sell spirits (hard liquor). Please see the Exemptions section below for more information.

All liquor for your special event must be bought from a Government Liquor Store or other authorized outlet.

Guests and patrons are not permitted to bring liquor to the event.

Homemade and UBrew/UVin beers and wines are not permitted at any SOL event.

## 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	3 oz. (85 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.

### 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.

### Days and Hours

Special occasion events are permitted on all days of the week.

#### Maximum hours:

Indoor events 9:00 a.m.–2:00 a.m. the following day  
Outdoor events 9:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m. the same day

Under very limited circumstances, you may receive permission from the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch to extend these hours. Please see the Exemptions section below for more information.

### 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.

### Maximum Numbers of SOLs

You may apply for a maximum of two SOLs per month, not exceeding 24 per year. (One SOL is good for one day or less – a 2 day event will require 2 SOLs, etc.) Under very limited circumstances, you may receive permission from the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch to obtain more SOLs in a month. Please see the Exemptions section below for more information.

### How Much Does an SOL Licence Cost?

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

Depending on the nature of your event, and whether there have been complaints or concerns with prior similar events, the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch general manager may require that one or more liquor inspectors attend your event. In this case you will be billed for the inspector's time and travel (\$330 per inspector per day, plus reasonable travel expenses).

### Posting Your SOL Licence

Your Special Occasion Licence, completed SOL application form 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. Except for family events, receipts for the liquor which has been purchased must be kept on site for inspection by a liquor inspector.



## 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 an HST registration number may include the HST in the price.

### SPIRITS

1 oz (28 ml)	\$3.00 / \$3.36 (incl. HST)
1.5 oz (43 ml)	\$4.00 / \$4.48 (incl. HST)
3 oz (85 ml)	\$8.00 / \$8.96 (incl. HST)

### CAN OR BOTTLE OF BEER, CIDER OR COOLER

Per can or bottle	\$4.00 / \$4.48 (incl. HST)
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### BEER, CIDER OR COOLER BY THE GLASS

12 oz (355 ml)	\$4.00 / \$4.48 (incl. HST)
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### WINE

no more than 100 per cent mark up over purchase price/no more than 100 per cent mark up over purchase price + 12% HST.

## Raising Money for Charitable Purposes

If you are a qualified organization or group and are raising money for a charitable purpose, you may obtain permission from the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch to charge prices above the maximums listed above.

A charitable purpose is one that provides for the relief of poverty or the advancement of education, religion, recreation, sports or athletics, aid to the disabled and handicapped, culture, youth or senior citizens, or other purposes beneficial to the community.

Please see the **Exemptions** section for more information.

## HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED? CALCULATOR

number of 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 750ml bottles or 6 x 4 oz glasses. Spirits are calculated based on 750ml 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 SOL application form. 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.

## Exemptions

Under very limited circumstances exemptions to the policies governing the SOL may be granted by the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch.

### Permission may be granted for you to:

- hold more than two SOLs per month or 24 per year;
- apply for an SOL if you are not a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident;
- extend the hours of your event;
- sell spirits (hard liquor) at a public event;
- charge more than the maximum liquor price if you are holding an event to raise money for a charitable purpose.

To apply for an exemption, please complete and submit the Special Occasion Licence Policy Exemption Application Form (LCLB031) and the \$100.00 fee to the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch. This form is available online at:

[www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/apply/special/index.htm](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/apply/special/index.htm)

**Please note:** You must apply for an exemption at least four weeks before the date of your event. If you are approved for an exemption, the written approval must be attached to your SOL application when you take it to the police, local government/First Nations (if required) and when you submit it to the Government Liquor Store.

## What are your Responsibilities as a Licence Holder?

Once you have obtained an SOL, it becomes your responsibility to protect guests from any harm that may result from drinking at your event – this is called the Duty of Care. This includes harm that may occur at the event or elsewhere, after the guests have left. If you serve alcohol to someone who becomes impaired, be aware that you may be legally liable for that person's behavior until that person gets home or to another place and is able to sober up.

If a guest appears intoxicated you must not serve or sell them liquor. You have a responsibility and right under the Liquor Control and Licensing Act to forbid an intoxicated person to enter your event, or request that they leave the area licensed by your SOL. Take steps to ensure that the person does not harm himself/herself or others.

Ensure a safe ride home for everyone. Promote responsible drinking by ensuring there is a reasonable amount of food and non-alcoholic drinks at your event. Consider offering complimentary, de-alcoholized and non-alcoholic beverages to designated drivers. See the Party Planning Guide, available in Government Liquor Stores or go to:

[www.bcliquorstores.com/files/attachments/partyplanningguide.pdf](http://www.bcliquorstores.com/files/attachments/partyplanningguide.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. The holder of the SOL may remain liable to penalties for those violations for up to six months after the event has ended.



## Contacts & More Information

### Liquor Distribution Branch/BC Liquor Stores Website

For store locations and other information, please visit:  
[www.bliquorstores.com](http://www.bliquorstores.com)

### Liquor Control and Licensing Branch Website

[www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/)

### Exemptions

The Special Occasion Licence Policy Exemption Application Form (LCLB031) is available online at:  
[www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/)

### Submit the completed form to:

SOL Case Manager

Liquor Control and Licensing Branch

PO Box 9292 Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, BC V8W 9J8

Tel: 250 387 1254 Toll Free: 1 866 209 2111

Fax: 250 387 9184

### 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](http://www.servingitright.com)

For more information contact go2 at [info@servingitright.com](mailto:info@servingitright.com), visit [www.go2hr.ca](http://www.go2hr.ca) or call 604 633-9787.

### The Laws that Govern Special Occasion Licences:

[www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/resources/index.htm](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/resources/index.htm)

### Security (door persons) Licensing

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

[www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/securityindustry](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/securityindustry), or call

Victoria: 250 387 6981

Vancouver: 604 660 2421

Toll Free – call Enquiry BC: 1 800 663 7867,

and ask to be transferred to 250 387 6981

*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 to impose terms and conditions upon a licence.*

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