



## Department of Commerce

Division of Liquor Control

Sheryl Maxfield, Director

Mike DeWine, Governor  
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

### FAQs for Liquor Permit Holders Amid COVID-19

#### How can I ensure the safety of my employees and customers?

- The [Responsible Restart Ohio plan](#) lays out best practices for businesses to follow when resuming operations. At a minimum, however, businesses must:
  - Designate 6-foot distances for employees and customers. Utilize barriers if applicable.
  - Make hand sanitizer and sanitizing products readily available for employees and customers.
  - Must require all employees to wear facial coverings, except where prohibited by law or other exceptions exists such as a health condition, the employee is working alone, or it creates an unsafe environment.
  - Implement separate operating hours for elderly and vulnerable customers when possible; and
  - Offer online and remote access of facility hours/operations and inform customers on how best to reach the business.

#### Can I return unopened beer/wine to a distributor?

- The Division has approved the pick-up and future replacement of beer, wine, or mixed beverages from a retail permit holder, at the Distributor's discretion. The product must be in its original sealed packaging and must have been purchased after February 15 for a specific event (i.e. Opening Day, St. Patrick's Day, NCAA, etc). You must reorder the same amount of product that you returned. For example, if you return 5 kegs of beer to a distributor, upon re-opening, you must buy 5 kegs of beer from that same distributor.
- This temporary alteration in the return policy is also subject to the federal Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) restriction. It is our understanding that TTB views only products purchased for events cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis to be exempt from the normal restrictions on consignment sales. TTB has stressed the voluntary nature of accepting these returns.
- Future guidance from TTB may also be forthcoming on this matter.

#### Can I still participate in the one-time Liquor Rebate Program?

- No, the one-time Liquor Rebate Program ended on August 31, 2020. The program was designed to help Ohio bars and restaurants navigate reopening during COVID-19. We were able to rebate \$4.423M to 8,856 permit holders. For more information about the program, click [here](#).

**Can Contract Liquor Agencies sell high proof spirituous liquor to non-Ohio residents?**

- Yes. An Order that previously limited the in-person purchasing of high proof spirituous liquor to customers who are not Ohio residents in Ashtabula, Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, Jefferson, and Belmont counties was lifted on May 29, 2020.

**Can I still return spirituous liquor to an Ohio Contract Liquor Agency?**

- The Division's Liquor Buyback Program ended on June 30, 2020. If you would still like to return unopened, high proof spirituous liquor purchased from mid-February through mid-March 2020 please contact the Liquor Enterprise Service Center at 877-812-0013 or [OhioLiquorInfo@com.ohio.gov](mailto:OhioLiquorInfo@com.ohio.gov).

**Can I sell bottles of spirituous liquor to patrons for off-premises consumption?**

- No. Only contract liquor agencies can sell bottles of spirituous liquor to a customer for carryout. Retail liquor establishments cannot sell any bottles of spirituous liquor, including 50mL bottles, to patrons for carryout, off-premises consumption.

**Can I sell alcoholic drinks that are normally offered for on-premises consumption to-go?**

- Yes, HB 669 makes permanent what is currently allowed under [Ohio Liquor Control Commission Rule 80](#) regarding selling alcoholic drinks to-go that the qualified permit holder normally offers for on premises consumption. For more information on HB 669, [click here](#).

**Can I deliver drinks-to-go?**

- A permit holder or its employees can deliver the to-go drinks to consumers or a permit holder can work with a licensed H class permit holder to deliver the drinks-to-go on its behalf.
- D-4 liquor permit holders may sell and deliver drinks for off-premises consumption to their members only.

**When do I need to stop selling alcohol for on-premises consumption?**

- HB 669 did not change the remainder of Commission Rule 80 temporarily limiting the hours that alcohol can be sold and consumed on-premises remains in effect.
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**I was notified that my liquor permit that expires on October 1, 2020, now expires on December 1, 2020, what do I need to do?**

- **Is my liquor permit affected by this change?**
  - All permit holders whose liquor permit expires on October 1, 2020 are affected. This includes all liquor permit holders in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, Summit, and Trumbull counties as well as all Ohio

manufacturers, wholesale distributors, and delivery/transportation businesses. For a visual description of the different renewal periods, [click here](#).

• **What does this change in the renewal date mean for me?**

- Permit holders in the October renewal period can take up to an additional two months to file a renewal application. Please note that if you wait until December 1<sup>st</sup> to file your renewal application, your renewal next year will still be due on October 1, 2021. The Division kindly asks permit holders to file their renewal applications upon receipt. This will assist the Division in timely processing renewal applications and permit fees.

• **When will the Division send out renewal applications?**

- All renewal applications for permit holders in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, Summit, and Trumbull counties as well as all Ohio manufacturers, wholesale distributors, and delivery/transportation businesses are being sent out. If you do not receive your renewal application by the end of October, please contact the Division's renewal section at 614-644-3162.

• **How do I file to renew my liquor permit?**

- All that has changed are dates, not the process. Therefore, you will continue to file your renewal application like you have in years past. For more information on how to file your renewal application, [click here](#).

• **My liquor permit says that it expires on October 1<sup>st</sup>, can I continue to sell alcoholic beverages after October 1, 2020?**

- Yes, your currently issued permit, expiring October 1, 2020, remains valid until December 1, 2020, unless the Division, or the Ohio Liquor Control Commission, issues an Order otherwise. Thus, please keep your current liquor permit, operating receipt, or authority to operate posted, like normal, until you receive new documentation from the Division.

**My liquor permit expired on June 1, 2020, what do I need to do?**

- The Division previously extended the renewal date for those Class C and D liquor permits that were set to expire on June 1, 2020. Those renewals are also now due December 1, 2020. It should be noted that those with June renewal dates will be on their regular schedule for June 1, 2021. For a visual map to determine whether your liquor permit (bright red shaded counties) would renew June 1<sup>st</sup>, click [here](#).

**What if I already submitted my June renewal application?**

- The Division has been contacting permit holders to determine whether they want to proceed with their renewal applications.

**Who do I contact to report a non-compliant permit holder?**

If you have any questions, or would like to report a violation, you may contact:

- The Department of Public Safety's, Ohio Investigative Unit Liquor Agents at their respective [district office](#).
- The Division of Liquor Control's Investigative Services Supervisors and Legal Counsel at the following phone numbers and/or email addresses:
  - Frank Chung, Investigative Services Eastern Ohio Region, 614-546-8492, [Frank.chung@com.state.oh.us](mailto:Frank.chung@com.state.oh.us)
  - Shaun Powers, Investigative Services Western Ohio Region, 614-546- 5658, [Shaun.powers@com.state.oh.us](mailto:Shaun.powers@com.state.oh.us)
  - Dominic Panzera, Legal Counsel, Ohio Division of Liquor Control, 614-644- 2489, [Dominic.Panzera@com.state.oh.us](mailto:Dominic.Panzera@com.state.oh.us)

**Who should I call to get answers about the Mass Gathering Health Order?**

- Contact your local Health Department.
- Call the COVID-19 hotline at 833-427-5634 or 833-4-ASK ODH.
- Call the Governor's Constituent Services line at 614-466-3555

All Ohio liquor [laws](#) and [rules](#) are available via the Division of Liquor Control [website](#) under "Resources."

As a reminder, many of the Division of Liquor Control staff are working remotely to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The Division appreciates your patience as staff respond to your needs. As always, you may also email [web.liqr@com.state.oh.us](mailto:web.liqr@com.state.oh.us) with any questions.

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE: This document is subject to change as new information becomes available\*\***