



A Special Occasion Permit is required if you are planning to sell or serve liquor at special occasions such as weddings, charity fundraisers, receptions, etc. held in any location other than a private place, residence, a licensed establishment, or under the authority of a caterer's endorsement. A "private place" is an indoor place that is not generally open to the public at the time of the event; for example, a private office or residence. Special Occasion permits are intended for occasional use only, not for profit-making by businesses or individuals.

Special Occasion Permits are issued from select Liquor Control Board of Ontario ("LCBO") stores located throughout the province.

Responsibility and liability

When you apply for a Special Occasion Permit, you agree to be held legally responsible for the safety and sobriety of your guests.

More and more, the law expects servers of alcoholic beverages to prevent intoxicated people from hurting themselves and others. Recent court decisions reflect this growing trend. If a guest gets drunk and hurts someone, you could be sued.

Occupier's Liability:

The organizers of the event and the operator of the location are jointly responsible for ensuring that the facility meets health and safety requirements. Both the permit holder and the hall owner could be sued for failing to ensure that the premises are safe for both sober and intoxicated guests. In fact, more law suits have been brought against licensed establishments as occupiers (those who have control of the premises) than as alcohol providers.

Protect yourself against being sued or charged by police. Know Ontario's liquor laws and obey them.

Reducing your risks

Learn how to lower your liability risks by taking the Smart Serve™ program and hire servers who have taken the course (or hire a licensed caterer). Smart Serve™ covers topics such as recognizing and preventing intoxication, how to deal with troublesome guests, and meeting your legal responsibilities.

Smart Serve™ is an effective, affordable and accessible technology-based responsible server training program. For information, call (416) 695-8737.

Minors? Major problems

Don't serve alcohol to minors. Serving minors leaves you open to both criminal and civil action.

Make sure to check the age identification of guests. When checking ID, make sure that it includes the person's **photograph**, includes the person's **birth date** and has been issued by a **government**.

Acceptable forms of ID include:

- ◆ an Ontario driver's licence with photo;
- ◆ a Canadian passport;
- ◆ a Canadian citizenship card with photo;
- ◆ a Canadian armed forces card with photo; and
- ◆ a BYID photo card issued by the LCBO.

Watch for drunks

Don't allow guests to become drunk. Drunks are sure to get you in trouble with the police, the AGCO, and the civil courts.

Watch for these signs that someone is becoming drunk:

- ◆ Fumbling
- ◆ Change in speech volume or pace

- ◆ Slurred speech
- ◆ Red eyes
- ◆ Excessive sweating
- ◆ Decreased alertness
- ◆ Stumbling or weaving
- ◆ Noticeably shallow breathing
- ◆ Sleepiness

Security

Be sure to have enough security staff on hand; well-trained door staff are essential to maintaining order and heading off problems. Security staff should carefully check ID at the door, refuse entry to anyone who is already intoxicated, monitor washrooms, and tactfully deal with potential troublemakers.

Know the law

As a permit or licence holder, you must operate according to the *Liquor Licence Act* and Regulations. These are a few of the important rules and policies to remember:

DON'T:

- Let people under 19 years of age drink liquor.
- Encourage excessive drinking or serve liquor to anyone you suspect may already be intoxicated.
- Permit drunken, quarrelsome, violent or disorderly conduct at the event.
- Serve smuggled, watered-down, or home-made liquor.
(Note: wine and beer made by a family member may be served at weddings or religious functions under a No-sale Reception permit.)
- Allow guests to take out or bring in liquor.
- Hold contests that involve buying, drinking or winning liquor.
- Allow guests to drink and drive.
- Make drinking the focus of the event.

DO:

- Make sure that you understand the *Liquor Licence Act* and Regulations. Contact the Ontario Government bookstore for a copy of the *Act* or visit www.e-laws.gov.on.ca

- Encourage responsible drinking.
- Post the permit and levy receipts.
- Train your staff in responsible serving practices. Have all staff take the Smart Serve™ program. Call (416) 695-8737 or toll free 1-877-620-6082 for more information.
- Serve liquor only within the allowed hours: **11 a.m. to 1 a.m., Monday to Saturday; noon to 1 a.m. Sunday.** On New Year's eve (December 31), serving liquor is permitted from 11 a.m. until 2 a.m.
- Serve and promote food.
- Offer a variety of low-alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks.
- Sell and serve only liquor that was bought on the permit through the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO), Brewers Retail, or liquor manufacturers' authorized retail store.
- Make sure that the number of people at the event is within the lawful capacity allowed for the premises.
- Check the identification of people you suspect are under 19 years of age.
- Ensure that anyone serving liquor is at least 18 years of age.
- Assign a trained staff member to monitor the door.
- Arrange alternative transportation for guests who need or request it.
- Ensure that the facility meets health and safety requirements.
- Create and enforce house policies that promote responsible service and moderate drinking practices.

Contacts:

- ◆ **Inspections** (416) 326-0330
- ◆ **Customer Service/General Enquiries** (416) 326-8700, toll free at 1-800-522-2876, or visit our website at: www.agco.on.ca