



Your obligations as a liquor licensee

Information for renewable limited club licence holders

Victoria boasts a vibrant hospitality and tourism industry with a culture of appreciating fine food and entertainment. The sale and enjoyment of alcohol is a part of this.

But holding a liquor licence is a privilege, not a right, and selling alcohol comes with very real and serious obligations.

The way you run your club has a direct impact on the safety of your customers and the community outside your doorstep. You have a responsibility to ensure that alcohol (liquor) is promoted and sold in a way that encourages responsible and appropriate drinking.

What is a renewable limited club licence?

As the holder of a renewable limited club licence you are allowed to supply alcohol to your members and their guests to drink within your licensed area. This area is also known as the red-line area as that is how it was drawn on the original plan that was approved with your licence. You are not able to supply your members or their guests with alcohol to take away.

Responsible service of alcohol

You must not supply alcohol to a person who is intoxicated.

A person is intoxicated if you believe their speech, balance, coordination or behaviour is noticeably affected by alcohol. If they're intoxicated, they are allowed to stay on your premises but you must not serve them any more alcohol.

The Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR) has issued guidelines on how to determine if a person is in a state of intoxication. These guidelines are available at vcglr.vic.gov.au.

You must not allow a drunken or disorderly person to be on your premises.

There is a difference between a person being intoxicated and being drunk. A person would typically be regarded as drunk if they are intoxicated to the point where they have lost control of their faculties or behaviour. If they're drunk OR disorderly you must not let them into your venue and if they're already there you must remove them.

You must not allow people under 18 years into the licensed area, unless you have an underage approval from the VCGLR, or the younger person is:

- with a responsible adult
- having a meal
- employed by you but not involved in the supply of alcohol
- taking a training program in hospitality.

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Serious penalties apply

The obligations that come with holding a liquor licence are taken very seriously by the Victorian Government. While this guide is a starting point, it is your responsibility to make sure you are aware of all your responsibilities. If you do not comply you may be fined, incur demerit points or have your licence suspended indefinitely.

A responsible adult is defined as a person who is over 18 years and who is:

- the younger person's parent, step-parent, guardian or grandparent
- the younger person's spouse
- a person who is acting in place of a parent and who could reasonably be expected to exercise responsible supervision of the younger person.

You must not allow people under 18 years to drink alcohol on your licensed premises under any circumstances.

You must not allow people under 18 years to be involved in the supply of alcohol.

Any time that liquor is available you must also have some type of food available.

It can be free or available for people to buy. It can be as simple as nuts or chips.

Free drinking water

You are required to make suitable free drinking water available to patrons on licensed premises where alcohol is consumed on-site. The law does not specify how the water is to be provided.

This will be up to your own discretion.

Fire safety

Fire safety inspectors from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade or the Country Fire Authority have the power to enter licensed premises, without notice, to inspect for serious fire threats. If a serious fire threat is discovered, the fire safety inspector

will advise the VCGLR, which has the power to immediately evacuate and close the licensed premises. If this occurs, your premises must not re-open until a fire safety inspector has declared it safe and the VCGLR has revoked the closure and evacuation order.

Sexually explicit entertainment

If your venue provides sexually explicit entertainment, you are required to inform the VCGLR within 21 days of commencing that entertainment. The notification form to be used can be found at vcglr.vic.gov.au.

You must have the following notices on display

Your current licence

This must be displayed in an obvious place where anybody can read the conditions.

Posters

For a renewable limited club licence there are two posters approved by the VCGLR that must be in an obvious position at your venue.

The two posters you need are titled:

- Intoxicated? Drunk? Disorderly?
- Under 18? No Supply.

Posters can be downloaded from the VCGLR website vcglr.vic.gov.au. You are welcome to print more copies if you would like to put them up in more than one area at your venue.

As a licensee you must meet all of your general obligations under the law, your planning permit and your specific liquor licence conditions.

Impact on the surrounding area

Your club must not cause problems with the amenity of the surrounding area.

Amenity is defined as the quality that an area has of being pleasant and agreeable.

The amenity of an area can be made worse by:

- unacceptable levels of patron noise, including music
- parking problems
- excessive traffic – hoon behaviour
- nuisance or vandalism
- build-up of rubbish
- indecent or offensive behaviour
- drunkenness on the street.

You have a legal responsibility to ensure the operation of your licence does not detract from the amenity of the area.

Business control in the supply of liquor

As a licensee the supply of liquor on your licensed premises can only be conducted by persons employed by or part of your business.

If another licensee wishes to supply liquor on or sublet any part of your licensed premises, you as the premises licensee must request consent in writing from the VCGLR.

The sub-let premises or the right to supply liquor form is available for download from the vcglr website vcglr.vic.gov.au.

Specific conditions on your licence

As well as your general obligations, you will have conditions listed on your licence that are directed specifically at your venue. You need to comply with these conditions or you will be committing an offence.

Note: Each of these conditions only apply to you if they are written on your licence.

The following are explanations of some of the common conditions.

Supplying alcohol at point of sale

If you have this condition you are able to sell alcohol to your visitors from the booth or canteen that has been approved. You can only make these sales during the sporting event and you may have restrictions as to the amount and type of alcohol involved in each sale. The licence will specify when the selling of alcohol must stop.

Supply of liquor at a pre-booked function

This condition will let you take bookings for functions from outside groups (non-members) and supply alcohol to them at your venue. This takes away the requirement of only serving to members and their guests while the function is on and in the area set aside for the function.

You must keep a register of the pre-booked functions with date, time, area and name of the organiser. You must also have signs displayed showing that the room or area is reserved for the pre-booked function.

You can only supply alcohol at the function within the trading hours listed on your licence.

Schedule 1

As a condition of holding a club licence, your club rules must comply with Schedule 1 of the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998*. A copy of Schedule 1 can be found at vcglr.vic.gov.au.

There may be more or different conditions listed on your individual licence. You must check your licence to see if you have any other requirements.

Administration and record keeping

You must keep a copy of the last red-line plan that was submitted for approval to the VCGLR.

You must notify the VCGLR in writing if anyone stops being a nominee within 14 days of the change.

You must keep a record of the name and address of each member, and last payment details of their membership.

You must keep a record of all visitors to the club. This can be in the form of a visitors book or as simple as an exercise book at the entrance of the club.

All records (members and visitors) must be available for viewing by the police, Compliance Inspector or other authorised person.

The Secretary of the club must ensure all financial records and accounts are kept up to date.

You must not let or sub-let any part of the premises without the consent of the VCGLR.

You must not allow anyone that is not employed by you to carry on a business of supplying liquor on the licensed premises without the consent of the VCGLR.

You must advise the VCGLR of any changes to your associates within 14 days of the change.

An associate is anyone who has significant influence in any of your alcohol related businesses. This influence might be in how the business is managed or it might be a purely financial interest.

If in doubt as to whether someone is an associate you should include them.

Additional requirement for suppliers of wholesale liquor

The holder of a renewable limited club licence may be required to collect and report information about their wholesale liquor transactions annually. Please see the VCGLR's website at vcglr.vic.gov.au for more information.

VCGLR can inspect you

Inspectors from VCGLR ensure that people who are licensed to sell alcohol meet their obligations under the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998*, including any conditions of their specific licence. They can issue warnings, infringement notices (fines) or recommend disciplinary action for licensees who fail to comply.

This publication avoids the use of legal language. Information about the law may have been summarised or expressed in general statements. This information should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional legal advice or reference to the actual legislation. Authorised by the Victorian Government.