

## In-Store Consumer Tasting of Distilled Spirits Guidelines

Sponsors of in-store tasting events will offer potential consumers tastings of their products to educate them while visiting a Vermont Liquor Agency. In-store tasting events will be conducted when most customers are shopping in the stores, such as Thursday and Friday evenings from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Saturday mornings from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.; and Saturday afternoon from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

The following requirements have been established and must be adhered to for all in-store consumer tasting events.

### *Who may conduct a product tasting?*

- Sponsors: A sponsor of a tasting shall be any licensed manufacturer of distilled spirits, its broker, or its agent.
- All persons conducting an in-store tasting event shall be twenty-one (21) years of age or older.

### *What are the general rules of operation for a tasting event?*

- Sponsors must obtain approval from the Department in order to conduct an in-store tasting event at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date of the proposed event.
- Prior to the in-store tasting event, sponsors must demonstrate evidence of liability insurance at coverage levels acceptable to the Department.
- Prior to the in-store tasting event, sponsors must provide the Department with a list of products to be tasted by consumers.
- No alcoholic beverages shall be served to persons under the age of twenty-one (21) years, or to persons who are visibly intoxicated.
- Only one (1) sponsor shall conduct an in-store tasting event at any one time.
- Sponsor must obtain the approval of the Liquor Agent prior to scheduling any tasting event.
- Tasting events shall be limited to a designated area of the store.
- No more than 8 customers shall be served at one time.

### *Is there a maximum time limit for in-store tasting events? Is there a limit on the number of tastings?*

- The duration of any in-store tasting event is limited to a maximum of two (2) consecutive hours.
- The number of tastings allowed for each store will be limited to 30 per year.

***How are products acquired for use in an in-store tasting event?***

- Products used during the in-store tasting event must be procured by the sponsor in accordance with the Department's requirements.
- Only listed items shall be used for tastings.
- Spirits used during an in-store tasting event must be dispensed from original containers prepared by the manufacturer with labels visible to the consumer.
- All cases and bottles of spirits shall be marked by the sponsor stating, "sampling only, not for resale."

***How many products may be available for sampling at any one tasting event?***

- A maximum of four (4) products per in-store tasting event may be made available for tasting by consumers.

***How much alcohol may be served to any one (1) consumer at a tasting event?***

- In the case of spirits, no more than one-quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) ounce shall be served to any one (1) consumer for each product tasted. No consumer shall be furnished more than one (1) ounce of spirits during any in-store tasting event.
- Product must be distributed to consumers via 2 oz sampling cups.

***Must a sponsor provide food in conjunction with a tasting event?***

- That will be left up to the sponsor and Liquor Agency.

***Is the sponsor responsible for providing supplies for an in-store consumer tasting?***

- Yes, the sponsor is responsible for providing all supplies and equipment associated with an in-store tasting event, including, but not limited to, dump buckets, water glasses, tasting containers and tables subject to the Department's approval.

***How should sponsors dispose of unused portions of opened alcohol containers and empty containers?***

- At the conclusion of the in-store tasting event, sponsors must remove the alcohol containers used in the tasting from the Liquor Agency. Unused product, bottles or containers shall not be furnished to employees of the Department or Liquor Agency.
- Tastings shall be conducted in compliance with all the requirements of V.S.A. Title 7, any applicable Liquor Control regulations, and any license conditions. Violations of these requirements may result in the Department's denial of future applications to conduct in-store tasting events and/or suspension or revocation of the manufacturer's license.