

Liquor License Checklist

By Lauren Meir

☐ General Licensing Rules

- ☐ **Licenses are usually valid for one year.**
- ☐ **An initial License fee is required** The amount varies by region.
- ☐ **Rewards for Good Behavior** Maintain a good relationship with the agency and you'll likely receive automatic license renewal for a lower annual rate.
- ☐ **Follow the Rules** If a complaint is filed against your establishment for violating any drinking laws, your license may be revoked.

☐ Understand the Licensing Process

- ☐ **Plan Ahead** Obtaining a ;liquor ;license for your establishment can take up to a year or more. Make sure you take this into consideration when starting the process, so you'll have it in time for opening.
- ☐ **Know the Region** The agencies that process and award liquor licenses vary by state, and some regions limit the number of liquor licenses in their communities.
- ☐ **Estimate the Cost** Application fees vary by state, region of operation, type of establishment and other factors. Take taxes into consideration as well.
- ☐ **Hire a Professional** If you're taking ownership of an existing bar, you may be required to buy their licence. Buying and ;transferring ;a ;liquor ;license can be complicated, so you should ;hire a lawyer ;with previous experience in this area.
- ☐ **Factor in Conditions** ;You may be able to acquire your ;liquor ;license if the population increases, as some communities will issue new permits during times of economic growth. This is usually done through a blind auction, the license is sold to the highest bidder. Consult your attorney for details on this process.
- ☐ **Know your Class** The type of establishment you have affects the kind of license you'll need to obtain, and how much you'll pay for it. The licenses are categorized by class, and their specific titles vary by state.
- ☐ **Dry Counties** Some areas in the U.S. have laws prohibiting the sale or serving of alcohol within it's borders. While there may be exceptions for certain private clubs, the rules are tricky so consult with a lawyer first.

☐ General Liquor License Classes

- ☐ **Beer and Wine** This type of license allows you to serve beer and wine only.
- ☐ **Brew Pub** Reserved for establishments that brew their own beer. Some states may require an additional license for serving the brew to the public.
- ☐ **Club** This license applies to golf clubs, country clubs, and other leisure clubs. The state or region dictates whether the club can serve all varieties of ;alcohol ;or just wine and beer.
- ☐ **Eatery** ;Applies ;only to small carry-out places that offer the option of purchasing bottled beer. This license permits the sale of beer only, and you are restricted in the amount you can sell per customer.
- ☐ **Restaurant** Typically 40% of sales must be from alcohol. Restaurants can serve beer, wine, and ;liquor.

- ☐ **Retail** This license applies to liquor stores, drugstore and convenience stores to allow the sale of bottled alcohol.
- ☐ **Tavern** Depending on the region, a Tavern licence may require your establishment to serve food.