

MOST COMMON VIOLATIONS IN A LIQUOR INSPECTION

Follow the rules and mitigate violations

When the State Liquor Enforcement Division (LED) inspects licensed premises, they are immediately looking for some basic things.

1 | ARE YOUR LICENSES UP TO DATE?

LED will check that all the liquor, sales tax, and retail food establishment licenses are current and displayed in a conspicuous and public location. Renew all of your licenses before they expire, and don't store licenses in an office, behind a door, or in a drawer.

2 | IS YOUR MINOR WARNING SIGN DISPLAYED?

LED will check for your minor warning sign and make sure it is displayed in an unobstructed location, easily visible to the public. CRA members can get this sign for FREE.

3 | ARE YOUR INVOICES AND RECEIPTS FOR LIQUOR PURCHASES FILED AND ORGANIZED?

LED will ask to see invoices and receipts. You must provide the current and previous three years' invoices and receipts for all liquor purchases. The law implies the invoices must be the original, but LED will accept copies or scans. Local enforcement may require originals - be sure to check with your local licensing authority. File your invoices and receipts by distributor or retail purchase in separate files, by year. Disorganized records can be a red-flag for inspectors.

4 | IS YOUR REGISTERED MANAGER INFORMATION UP TO DATE?

The establishment's manager is required to be named on the license through the local and state licensing authority. LED will check on this. If the manager of your establishment changes, you have 10 days to notify the local licensing authority and 30 days to notify the LED.

5 | ARE YOU SERVING FOOD PER YOUR LICENSE REQUIREMENTS?

LED will check that the appropriate food is available for purchase depending on the type of license you have. Hotel and restaurant licensees must serve meals between 8:00 am-8:00 pm, and meals or light snacks and sandwiches served after 8:00 pm while open and serving drinks. Lodging and Entertainment and Tavern licensees must serve light snacks or sandwiches whenever open and serving drinks. Brew Pubs and Distillery Pubs have a minimum 15% food sales requirement.

6 | DO YOU HAVE MOLD, FRUIT FLIES, OR OTHER UNHYGIENIC CONDITIONS?

Inspectors want the bar and food preparation areas to be clean and sanitary for service of food or drink. LED won't do a full health inspection, but they will look for fruit flies in liquor bottles or mold in tap lines and ice bins. They will verify the fruit is fresh, and food preparation areas are clean and healthy. Be sure your bottle tops are covered, tap lines and ice bins are cleaned, fruit garnish is circulated properly, and food preparation areas are maintained and safe for service.

7 | ARE YOU SELLING TOBACCO?

LED will check to see if your establishment is selling tobacco products and that you are following all of the appropriate laws and regulations.

8 | DO YOU ALLOW OR PROMOTE GAMBLING?

If LED sees raffle tickets (sometimes used as drink tickets) they will ask about it. RAFFLES QUALIFY AS GAMBLING AND CAN'T BE CONDUCTED WITHOUT A RAFFLE LICENSE. You may use tickets for door prizes as long as the tickets are not "sold" and every customer gets the same number.

9 | HAVE YOU MODIFIED THE LICENSED PREMISES?

Did you move or add a bar? Did you install a fire pit? Have you changed a door, wall or partition? Are you storing alcohol in a location not on the licensed premises? LED will compare your establishment to the original license application. Before any changes can be made, LED and local licensing must be informed through a "modification of the premises" application. That process may require posting of the changes or a public hearing.

10 | ARE YOU CHECKING ID'S?

LED will review how you check ID's and ask about your policies for checking ID's. Make sure your staff is checking ID's before serving a patron. It is your responsibility to not serve minors.

11 | ARE YOU TRANSFERRING ALCOHOL BETWEEN DIFFERENT ESTABLISHMENTS?

Do you have multiple liquor licenses? Is each licensed premises purchasing their own alcohol? Each licensed establishment must purchase the alcohol that is being used at that establishment.

DID YOU KNOW? Taking ServSafe Alcohol Certification class qualifies as a mitigating factor in the event of some liquor violations. Find the class schedule at CORestaurant.org.