

Information Sheet - Classes of DBR-Issued Liquor Licenses

Last Updated 11-18-2020

Below is general information and citations for the classes of liquor licenses issued by DBR. Each license type has certain restrictions and certain privileges which you will need to evaluate yourself or with an attorney. If you are making/selling products under two different types of licenses, you must distinguish between the product/business lines and follow the different rules for each product/business line.

THIS IS A COURTESY INFORMATION SHEET ONLY. YOU NEED TO REVIEW THE LAWS AND ANY CHANGES TO THE LAWS. The cited statutes are found here: <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE3/INDEX.HTM>; however, there may be bills that amend the laws after the last update to this General Assembly page.

- To manufacture alcohol, you need a winery/farmer-winery license for wine, brewery or brewpub license for beer/malt, and distillery license for distilled spirits. There is also a rectifier license for blending and bottling certain wine and spirit products (methods other than continuous original distillation).
 - Brewery, Winery, Distillery: 3-6-1
 - Farmer-Winery: 3-6-1.1
 - Brewpub: 3-6-1.2 and 3-7-7.2
 - Rectifier's license: 3-6-2 through 3-6-8
- A farmer-winery may sell the wine made on site in its tasting room and has expanded privileges. But, farmer-wineries must follow certain the in-state ingredient sourcing requirements to qualify for this privilege.
 - 3-6-1.1
- A winery may not sell alcohol directly to consumers but may only sell it to a wholesaler for distribution.
 - 3-6-1, 3-6-16
- Breweries and distilleries may sell the products they make on-site directly to consumers, subject to the limitations on amounts set in the statute.
 - 3-6-1
- Brewpubs are also permitted to sell products directly to consumers, subject to statutory limitations.
 - 3-6-1.2
- A rectifier cannot sell directly to consumers.
 - 3-6-6
- Wholesalers are businesses that buy product from a manufacturer and sell it to a retailer. Retailers can only purchase alcohol from wholesalers.
 - 3-6-9, 3-6-10, 3-7-18
- There are certain restrictions on cross-tier interests between the three tiers, manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers. See 3-6-15 and 3-7-22.

- DBR also issues Class P Caterer license. This license has very specific statutory and regulatory parameters including that only entities with a kitchen and serving food at events qualify, that the alcohol served must be purchased from a retail licensee, that the business is for private events at varying locations throughout the state, etc.
 - 3-7-14.2, Rule 1.4.42
- The other classes of DBR-issued licenses are must less common. Class BOP “brew on premises” is a special license for providing supplies and facilities where individuals come to make their own beer for their own consumption. Class G licenses are for service for consumption on premises while en route on a dining car, railroad car, marine vessel, or airplane.
 - Class BOP: 3-7-7.4, Rule 1.4.46
 - Class G: 3-7-15 (Class G applicants should also check with the port municipality)
- All other major types of liquor licenses are considered retail licenses and are issued by the municipality, whom you should contact directly if you have questions.
- Please review the other materials posted on our website, including content on the application process and various FAQs that may address your questions. If you still have questions after reviewing this information, please e-mail us with as much specificity as possible.

Brewpubs Additional Information

There are several statutes that apply to the licensing of brewpubs. In setting up a brewpub business, the applicant has choices on how to structure the business, the scope of activities, and which license(s) to apply for. There are essentially three licensing application choices, all of which require obtaining both state DBR and local/municipal approvals.

(a) Apply to DBR for a Brewpub Manufacturer License under § 3-6-1.2. DBR Rule 1.4.6(B)(8) requires local approval in the form of a § 3-7-7.2 Brewpub Retail License or other locally issued liquor license that authorize the activities of a brewpub).

(b) Apply to DBR for a Manufacturers License under § 3-6-1, and apply to the city/town for a Brewpub Retail License under § 3-7-7.2.

(c) For maximum privileges, apply for to DBR for both a Brewpub Manufacturer License under § 3-6-1.2 and a Manufacturers License under § 3-6-1; and to the municipality for a § 3-7-7.2 Brewpub Retail License or other locally issued liquor license that authorize the activities of a brewpub).

Breweries (3-6-1) who do not operate as brewpubs do not require any specific local liquor license.