

The Role of the Liquor Control Commission

The Liquor Control Commission is a three-member regulatory commission within the Department of Consumer Protection and is chaired by the Commissioner of Consumer Protection.

The Commission oversees provisional permits and supports the efforts of the Department by holding formal administrative hearings as well as compliance meetings regarding allegations of liquor control violations, the suitability of applicants and permittee premises, sales to minors and intoxicated persons, unlawful activity on permittee premises, and other matters.

During fiscal year 2010, the Liquor Control Commission revoked the permits of five establishments and imposed 159 suspensions for violations of State liquor laws.

For more information on the Department of Consumer Protection Liquor Control Division, please call 860-713-6210 or visit the agency website at www.ct.gov/dcp.

For requests for speakers or training provided by the Liquor Control Division, please call 860-713-6217.

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Some Facts About



Liquor Control in Connecticut

The Liquor Control Division of the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection protects the health and safety of Connecticut citizens by regulating all persons and businesses involved in distributing, selling, and dispensing alcoholic liquor in order to prevent sales to minors and intoxicated persons, to guarantee product integrity, and to ensure that licensed premises are safe and sanitary.

Emphasis on Enforcement

The Liquor Control Division conducts inspections and investigations to ensure compliance with State laws and regulations pertaining to the manufacture, importation, sale, and dispensing of alcoholic liquor. Applicants for liquor permits are investigated to assess their eligibility; establishments already having permits are inspected to ensure that safety, sanitary conditions, and suitability of conduct requirements are met.

Field agents investigate alleged violations of the State Liquor Control Act, including:

- the sale of alcohol to minors and intoxicated persons;
- the conduct of premises as it pertains to unlawful activity such as suspected drug dealing, fights, and illegal gambling;
- deceptive or unfair trade practices;
- pricing;
- labeling;
- violations of regulations regarding adult entertainment;

- purchases of alcoholic liquor from prohibited entities;
- reported instances of non-compliance;
- brand registration; and
- consumer complaints

The Division works with State and local law enforcement officers to conduct enforcement actions such as alcohol compliance checks. While compliance checks are designed to identify licensed retailers that would sell alcohol to a person under the age of 21, they are not designed to compel or entice the retailer to sell to minors.

The volunteer youth involved in these operations are provided and trained by the Connecticut Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking.

In a typical compliance check, the volunteer youth enters the store and attempts to buy alcoholic liquor. If asked for proof of age before making a liquor purchase, the youth volunteer will provide his or her true age and valid Connecticut driver's license, if available.

In fiscal year 2010, the Division conducted 800 alcohol compliance checks throughout the State in partnership with local and state law enforcement officers and youths provided by the Connecticut Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking.

All establishments found selling alcohol to minors are referred to the Liquor Control Commission and given the opportunity to address the charges in an administrative hearing before the Commission.

Charges can include fines and suspensions, and can result in loss of permit for repeat offenses. In FY 2010, 172 establishments failed by selling alcoholic liquor to a minor, and faced resulting fines and possible suspensions of their permits.

Liquor Control Agents have authority to seize alcoholic liquor products when necessary, maintain evidence for hearings and court cases, and supervise the destruction or disposal of illegal products. Agents may prepare investigative reports, testify at Liquor Control Commission proceedings, and may also testify in Federal or State courts.

Information and Referral

The Liquor Control Division responds to inquiries from citizens, permittees and law enforcement officers seeking information about permit holders, permit requirements, brand registrations, the State Liquor Control Act and Regulations, acceptable forms of identification, and related matters.

Agents and staff also conduct training for State and local law enforcement officers, provide workshops for permittees and servers, and assist organizations such as the Governor's Prevention Partnership, the Connecticut Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) by providing information and strategies designed to prevent underage drinking. The Division provides speakers and materials to these entities as well as to special interest groups, civic and professional organizations, and schools.