

Liquor licensing requirements in Queensland

Date: Sunday July 21, 2024

Unless an accepted exemption applies, a liquor or wine license or permit (‘liquor license’) is required for any person or organisation to supply alcohol in Queensland. There are many types of licenses and permits that are suited for different businesses and community organisations. Liquor licenses in Queensland are managed by the Queensland Office of Liquor and Gaming.

What are the exceptions to the requirement for a liquor license?

The following businesses may have an exemption to the requirement for a liquor license in order to supply or sell alcohol, depending on their circumstances:

Hairdressers/hairdressing salons;

Limousines;

Tour operators;

Businesses selling gift baskets and flowers;

Bed and breakfasts;

Host farm accommodation; and

Hospitals, nursing homes and retirement villages.

More information about the requirements and details of these exceptions have been provided by the Queensland Government here .

What types of liquor licenses can be applied for?

There are several types of liquor licenses that can be applied for in Queensland. The primary way that these can be distinguished is by their length/duration – i.e whether they are a license (longer term permission) or a permit (shorter term permission).

Generally, where a person intends to undertake a business that includes activities that require a liquor license (i.e the supply or sale of alcohol) then they would likely be requiring a license (as opposed to a permit).

Examples of a liquor or wine license include:

Commercial hotel license;

Bar license;

Artisan producer/wholesaler license; and

Nightclub license.

A permit may also be required by the holder of a liquor license to participate in activities involving the sale or supply of alcohol outside of the usual terms of their liquor license, such as for a one-off event like a trade fair or festival.

Even where a person or organisation does not hold a liquor or wine license, they may, under some circumstances, be able to apply for a permit, such as a community liquor permit. It should be noted that some organisations may be allowed to sell or supply alcohol at a fundraising event or raffle without the requirement for a permit. The Queensland Office of Liquor and Gaming has an online assessment tool available for organisations to understand whether they may be exempt from this requirement.

How do I get information about a business's liquor license?

The public are able to search information relating to a liquor license. Basic information can be obtained for free or more detailed

information can be obtained for a small fee. This search can be performed through this online portal.

How do I apply for a liquor license for my business?

Applicants can apply online for a liquor or wine license or permit through the Australian Business License and Information Service (ABLIS). More information about the application process for the specific license or permit the applicant is considering can be found on the Business Queensland page, "How to apply for a liquor or win licence", and on the ABLIS website.

What is considered in the application for a liquor license?

When considering applications for a liquor license, the Queensland Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation ('OLGR') will consider:

whether the applicant is a 'fit and proper person';

the suitability of the proposed premises for the activities applied for in the license;

the community impact of the liquor license; and

any public objections and submissions that may have been received in relation to the application.

Determining if a liquor license applicant is a fit and proper person

When considering whether an applicant for a liquor license is a fit and proper person, the OLGR will consider various factors, including:

past police interactions;

past bankruptcies of the applicant; and

past liquor licensing interactions.

More information about the factors considered to determine if an applicant is a fit and proper person is made available by the Queensland Government here.

Public objections and submissions to a liquor license application

Generally, as part of the application for a liquor license, applicants will be required to advertise that they are applying for the application. During this period of advertisement, persons who may be impacted by the liquor license (if it is granted) may be permitted to lodge an objection to the application.

The Queensland Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation will consider appropriate objections when deciding whether to grant the liquor license.

What other information do I need to provide when applying for a liquor license?

The information and documents required for the application will change depending on what liquor license is being applied for and may include:

- a community impact statement; and
- risk assessment management plan.

What can I do if my liquor license application is refused?

If your liquor license application is refused and you are not happy with the decision, you can request that the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal ('QCAT') review the decision within 28 days of receipt of the liquor license application decision. More information about this process can be found on the QCAT website here.

Get help from a commercial lawyer

If you need a liquor licensing for your business and you're having issues with any part of the process, or your license application has been denied, get in touch with us for some free advice about your options.

This article is of a general nature and should not be relied upon as legal advice. If you require further information, advice or assistance for your specific circumstances, please contact us.