

Special Occasion Liquor Licenses

AGFT issues Special Occasion licenses for private events and for community-based fundraising events.

When to I need a Special Occasion liquor license?

When you host a private event away from a private residence AND you will serve or sell alcohol:

- ▶ You need a class 1 license to serve alcohol.
- ▶ You need a class 2 license to sell alcohol.
- ▶ Your "private event" must be for invited guests only -for family and friends. If your event will be large, we may require a guest list to ensure that the event is a private event, and not open to the public. No advertising allowed.

novascotia.ca/sns/access/alcohol-gaming/liquor/special-occasion-liquor-licenses.asp

When your group or organization hosts a community-based fundraising event that will sell alcohol:

- ▶ You need a class 3 license.
- ▶ Your event must intend to raise funds for a community, charitable, or religious purpose - and that purpose must be set out in your application.
- ▶ Your event is open to the public - anyone may attend or buy a ticket to attend.
- ▶ You must adhere to the minimum drink price regulations.
- ▶ You may need a letter of support from the municipality/police.
- ▶ You may need to submit a security plan.
- ▶ Advertising is allowed.

Types of Special Occasion Liquor licenses

Type of License	Type of Event	Uses	Advertising Allowed?	Cost
Class 1 Alcohol is served but not sold	Private event open to invited guests only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • away from a private residence • where alcohol is served, but not sold • entirely free of charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wedding • anniversary • shower • staff party • birthday party • graduation party • reunion • other family function 	NO	\$12.45
Class 2 Alcohol is sold	Private event open to invited guests only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • away from a private residence • where alcohol is sold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wedding • anniversary • shower • staff party • birthday party • graduation party • reunion • other family function 	NO	\$24.95
Class 3	Public event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to raise funds for a community purpose • where alcohol is sold 	community, religious, or charitable organization that wants to sell alcohol at a public event to raise funds for community purposes	YES	\$62.30
Class 4	Special event by a permanent liquor license holder	business extends their license to a space that is not otherwise licensed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parking lot • other outside space 	YES	\$62.30

Who can apply for a Special Occasion license?

Special Occasion licenses may be issued to

- ▶ an individual for a private event - like a wedding or family reunion
- ▶ a business for a private event - like a staff function or grand opening
- ▶ a registered charity or organization for a community, religious, or charitable fundraising purpose

How long does it take to get a license?

Up to 10 business days. Plan to submit your application at least two weeks before the event. You need the license number when buying the alcohol for the event.

Can you have multiple events licensed on one Special Occasion license?

No. Licenses are issued on a per day basis. One license is issued for each event.

Can I get a Special Occasion license for my house?

No. Licenses cannot be issued for a private residence:

- ▶ You don't need a license to serve alcohol to your guests in your home.
- ▶ You are prohibited by law from selling alcohol from a private residence.

Can my business promote our grand-opening and be open to the public?

No. A license can be issued to a business so that they can serve alcohol to invited guests. But the private event cannot be advertised. The event with alcohol cannot be open to the public.

Are there any restrictions on how I can use the proceeds from my community-based fundraising event?

Yes. The fundraising must be for a community purpose identified in the application. Money raised from the event must be used for the purpose set out in the application. Expenses incurred in running the event can be paid from the money raised from alcohol sales. However, the money left over after expenses are paid cannot be shared with a third party-concert promoters, facility owners, or entertainers.

Where can I buy the alcohol for my event?

All alcohol served at the event must be purchased from

- ▶ a NSLC location
- ▶ an approved agency store
- ▶ a permitted manufacturer

All alcohol must be purchased with the license. Receipts for the purchased alcohol must be available during the event. The license number must appear on receipts.

Growlers and NSLC bottle-your-own are permitted, but ferment-on-premises (U-Vint/UBrew) product is not permitted, and neither is homemade alcohol.

What can I do with any leftover alcohol?

You may request approval to use surplus or leftover alcohol at a second event. Direct your inquiries to AGFT staff: AGDLicense@novascotia.ca.

Are “Bring Your Own Liquor” events allowed?

No. All alcohol on site must be on an NSLC/manufacture’s receipt and must note the liquor license number issued by AGFT

Can I serve homemade beer and/or wine at my event?

No. Alcohol served or sold at a licensed event must be purchased from a NSLC store, approved agency store, or permitted manufacturer.

Can I charge an entry fee and allow “all you can drink”?

No. Alcohol must be sold per drink. You can neither advertise nor provide “all you can drink” liquor at a licensed special event. AGFT promotes responsible consumption as part of our mandate.

What if I buy too much alcohol?

NSLC can refund unopened spirits and bottles of wine and sealed full cases of beer and coolers with the original receipt. Contact NSLC Customer Service for details: 1-800-567-5874.

Are you allowed to bring your own liquor (BYOB) to a Special Occasion Class 1 event?

No. BYOB is OK for celebrations in a private residence. All alcohol at a licensed event must be purchased from the NSLC, an agency store, or a permitted manufacturer.

What about liquor sampling?

Sampling events held by licensed manufacturers are permitted by the NSLC. Sampling permits are obtained by the winery/brewery/distillery directly from the NSLC.

A manufacturer’s liquor representative may provide samples at an event that has a Special Occasion license, but not in the same designated area, in accordance with the Nova Scotia Liquor Licensing Regulations. Contact AGFT for more information.

Can minors attend my event?

Yes, for wedding receptions and wedding anniversaries. Maybe for other types of family or cultural events. You must submit a written request with the Special Occasion application giving details of the event. The AGFT will determine if the event is suitable for minors to attend.

Can a minor work at a Special Occasion Licensed event?

Within limits, with written approval. Minors can be employed to work in meal service or clean-up when you have written approval from AGFT.

Minors are never allowed to be in the bar area.

How many people can I have at my event?

That depends on the venue. It is your responsibility to ensure that the premises where you are holding your function is large enough, according to local or provincial fire regulations, to accommodate all your guests. Large events must have appropriate number of security and bar staff. A security plan and police approval may be required to be provided to AGFT.

Is a half-hour last-call required? Must patrons leave the event a half-hour after the last call?

Yes. You must announce last call. Often this is a half-hour before the event end time, but you may give less time. “Last call” lets people know that the bar is closing and the event is over. Patrons must leave the event by the end time on your license. Clean-up may happen after your event end time, if your venue allows.

Where can a licensed event be held?

A license may be issued for an event to be held at

- ▶ a community hall
- ▶ a rented facility
- ▶ a hotel/motel function room
- ▶ an outdoor area that includes tents, canopies, or fenced-in areas
- ▶ other facilities if approved by the AGFT

The proposed licensed premises must meet fire safety regulations, and the AGFT may require confirmation of a fire safety inspection for the premises.

Do private events on private property (including offices) need a license?

Private events on private property or private places of employment (such as offices that are closed to the public at the time of the private event) do not need a license when the alcohol is provided free of charge. However, AGFT will consider an application if received.

Do outdoor events have other requirements?

Yes. When you apply for a license for an outdoor event you must include

- ▶ a diagram of the area to be licensed including the dimensions of the area
- ▶ details of the type of enclosure to be used, such as tent, canopy, fencing
- ▶ details of the number of security persons, staff, and volunteers who will be present during the event
- ▶ a copy of a favorable Fire Safety inspection for any tent structure included in the licensed area from either the Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency (902-490-5530 or hrmfire@halifax.ca) or the Provincial Fire Marshal's Office (902-424-5721)

Within the Halifax Regional Municipality, you must also include

- ▶ written support for the event from the Halifax Regional Police (902-490-5133)

When is a fire inspection required for a Special Occasion License?

A fire inspection is required for any outdoor event with a tent or enclosed area, or as requested by AGFT.

Do I need insurance for my event?

Contact your local insurance broker/agent to determine if liability insurance is required or advisable.

What are my responsibilities?

A license holder is responsible to follow Nova Scotia liquor laws and regulations:

- ▶ Liquor Licensing regulations
- ▶ Liquor Control Act

A license holder should request valid identification (NS Driver's License or other valid photo ID) to ensure service or consumption of alcohol is limited to people who are 19 years of age or older.

A license holder must maintain adequate control of the event and ensure that persons attending the event are not over served.

Who do I contact about permanent liquor licensing?

Contact our permanent liquor licensing staff:

902-424-6160 or toll free 1-877-565-0556

How do you apply for a Special Occasion license?

Download an application from our website:

Forms & Permits

Call us to have an application sent to you by mail:

Halifax Regional Municipality

Telephone: 902-424-6160

Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Telephone: 902-563-3495

Toll free: 1-877-565-0556

Pick up an application at our office in Dartmouth or Sydney:

Halifax Regional Municipality

Address: Alcohol, Gaming, Fuel and Tobacco

PO Box 545

780 Windmill Road, 2nd Floor

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2Y 3Y8

Toll-Free: 1-877-565-0556 (within Nova Scotia)

Telephone: 902-424-6160 (in metro)

Fax: 902-424-6313

Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Address: Alcohol, Gaming, Fuel and Tobacco

1030 Upper Prince Street, Suite #1

Sydney, Nova Scotia B1P 5P6

Telephone: 902-563-3495

Fax: 902-563-3430

For more information:

- ▶ Alcohol and Gaming
- ▶ AGDLicense@novascotia.ca