

A Wisconsin Alcohol Industry Update

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Introducing the Newest Members of Our Team!

The Division of Alcohol Beverages is pleased to introduce four new members who joined us at the end of August.

Caitlin Giddings joins the Education & Outreach Unit from Humboldt County, California, where she served as the Project Director of the California Tobacco Prevention Program. There, she worked with retailers, the board of supervisors, community members, and the county health department to navigate the changing landscape of tobacco regulation. Caitlin has educated local and state elected officials, engaged with tribal members, and advocated for an extremely rural community. Caitlin works out of the Eau Claire Office.

Meg McCullough has several decades of experience working in Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Awareness (AOTDA) and Prevention. Meg's work on alcohol beverages was with community and state public health coalitions working to create and implement public health ordinances, policy, and law changes. Meg joins the Education & Outreach Unit from the FDA where she served as a commissioned inspector focusing on tobacco enforcement and control. Meg has experience working with municipal clerks and governing bodies on licensing issues, explaining complicated regulatory laws to industry members, and building coalitions to get things done. Meg works out of the Appleton Office.

Agent Holly McManus brings 17 years of law enforcement experience to the Enforcement Bureau. Previously with the St. Francis Police Department, Agent McManus was the first K9 officer, and served as a corporal, SWAT Team Member, FBI Task Force Officer, and Detective. Agent McManus brings her strong investigatory experience to the Division of Alcohol Beverages and will work out of the Milwaukee Office.

Attorney Bridget Laurent joins the Division from the DOR Office of the General Counsel. Prior to her time with the Department, Attorney Laurent served as Governor Tony Ever's Deputy General Counsel specializing in ethics, open records, and liaising with Wisconsin departments and stakeholders across the state to facilitate efficient and open communication and problem solving. Bridget will work out of the Madison office.

With these additions, the Education and Outreach Unit Team is complete and fully staffed for the first time since the creation of the Division! We're excited for the wealth of experience our team has and the opportunities that having a full house presents.

Connect with us:

(608) 266-2526 | DORAlcohol@wisconsin.gov



Legislative Update

The 2025-2027 Biennial Budget was signed by Governor Evers on July 3, 2025. There were notable changes that impact the Division of Alcohol Beverages. 2023 Wisconsin Act 73 created the Division but did not provide funding to pay for the staff and programmatic activities of the division. Thanks to the efforts of Division Administrator Mark Meyer, DOR Secretary David Casey, and many of the Division's stakeholder groups, 2025 Wisconsin Act 15 created a new appropriation to attribute permit fees paid by the industry to the Division. The budget also created three new employee positions in DAB, two in the Enforcement Bureau and one in the Permitting Bureau. Thank you to the stakeholders that were excellent advocates for us. Just when we thought we were finished hiring, we'll be at it again this fall!

Clerk's Corner: Seller's Permits for Retail Alcohol Beverage Licensing

Must applicants for alcohol beverage retail licenses and permits register with DOR to collect sales tax?

Yes. Any person making retail sales of alcohol beverages in Wisconsin must register with DOR to collect sales tax, unless an exception applies. DOR issues a 15-digit seller's permit number that begins with "456" to sellers who register to collect sales tax.

Under Wisconsin law ([sec. 77.61\(11\)](#), Wis. Stats.), a municipal clerk or other official who issues or renews alcohol beverage retail licenses must require proof that the applicant is registered to collect sales tax and holds a seller's permit or has been informed by DOR that a seller's permit will be issued.

How do municipal clerks obtain proof of a seller's permit?

Request the applicant provide a copy of the seller's permit certificate, or search using DOR's online tool:

- Go to [My Tax Account](#)
- Under the "Business" section, click on "Search Account Number/Filing Frequency"
- You'll need the following information about the applicant:
 - o seller's permit number (i.e., Wisconsin Tax Number) or federal employer ID number (FEIN)
 - o business or last name
 - o zip code

What are some exceptions that apply?

A business that does not hold a seller's permit for the collection of sales tax may still qualify to obtain an alcohol beverage retail license in the following instances:

- The applicant is a nonprofit organization that qualifies for the occasional sale exemption. In this case, the municipal clerk should verify that the organization is a nonprofit organization and ask the organization to confirm they are not required to hold a seller's permit as explained in DOR [Publication 206](#), *Sales Tax Exemptions for Nonprofit Organizations*.

Note: DOR does not issue documentation stating that an organization meets the occasional sales exemption. Organizations must determine whether they qualify for the occasional sales exemption based on their facts and circumstances.

- The applicant is an LLC and furnishes a seller's permit that is not in the name of the LLC. In this case, the municipal clerk should call DOR at 608-266-2776 before issuing the license to verify whether the seller's permit is valid for the LLC.

Who do I contact if I have questions about Wisconsin sales tax or seller's permits?

Contact our customer service team at (608) 266-2776 or DORSalesandUse@wisconsin.gov.

Applicable Laws and Rules

This document provides statements or interpretations of Wisconsin statutes and administrative rules enacted as of September 22, 2025. Laws enacted and in effect after this date, new administrative rules, and court decisions may change the interpretations in this document. Guidance issued prior to this date that is contrary to the information in this document is superseded by this document, according to sec. 73.16(2)(a), Wis. Stats.



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Event Venue Changes are Coming!

The final provisions of 2023 Wisconsin Act 73 go into effect on January 1, 2026. All the remaining implementation items are related to event venues. Keep reading for important information about the upcoming changes.

Public Place Law Amended

The “public place” law requires an appropriate alcohol beverage license or permit if sales of alcohol beverages occur, or consumption of alcohol beverages takes place in a public place. 2023 Wisconsin Act 73 defined “public place.” On January 1, 2026, the new definition goes into effect.

Per [sec. 125.09\(1\)](#), Wis. Stats. (effective January 1, 2026), a “public place” includes a venue, location, open space, room, or establishment that is any of the following:

- Accessible and available to the public to rent for an event or social gathering.
- Held out for rent to the public for an event or social gathering.
- Made available for rent to a member of the public for an event or social gathering.

The practical effect of this law change is that any event venue that meets any of the above criteria is considered a “public place” for alcohol beverage consumption purposes and must hold an alcohol beverage license or permit.

Event Venues Have a Choice

Event Venues that meet the description above may obtain an authorization using one of two options:

- Obtain an alcohol beverage license from a Wisconsin municipality which will authorize the licensee to make sales of alcohol beverages on the licensed premises.
- Obtain a No-Sale Event Venue Permit from the Division of Alcohol Beverages. See [Fact Sheet 3122](#), No-Sale Event Venue Permits, for details about the permit including authorizations, limitations, and qualifications.

Resources to Guide Decision-Making are Available

For Event Venues pursuing a DAB-issued No-Sale Event Venue permit, see the resources below:

- [Fact Sheet 3122](#), *No-Sale Event Venue Permits*
- [2023 Wisconsin Act 73 Common Questions, No-Sale Event Venue Permit](#)

For Event Venues pursuing a municipally issued retail alcohol beverage license, see the resources below:

- [2023 Wisconsin Act 73 Common Questions, Event Venue Retail Licensing](#)
- [Fact Sheet 3101](#), *Licenses for Retail Sale of Alcohol Beverages*
- [Publication 302](#), *Information for Wisconsin Alcohol Beverage Retailers*

Application Forms are Expected This Fall

The Division is creating application forms for No-Sale Event Venue Permits and for Qualifying Event Venue Certification. New forms are expected to be available for use at the end of November.

Event Venues applying for local retail licenses should reach out to the clerk in the municipality where the event venue is located to determine what application forms, restrictions, and other municipal ordinances may apply to licensees in that community.

Common Questions on Alcohol Beverage Production Agreements

What is a production agreement?

A production agreement is a written contract between two alcohol beverage producers allowing one producer to assist the other in the production of alcohol beverages by providing resources such as allowing the use of space or equipment, bottling or labeling assistance, or use of trademarks. The three types of production agreements are:

- Contract production
- Alternating proprietorship
- Licensing agreement

Who can enter into production agreements?

Only two alcohol beverage producers holding the same Wisconsin production permit type may enter into a production agreement. This means no alcohol beverage wholesaler or retail licensee may enter into such an agreement with a Wisconsin producer.

Exceptions:

- Brewers and brewpubs may enter into production agreements
- Certain out-of-state producers called out-of-state recipe suppliers may enter into contract production agreements without a Wisconsin permit

Do I need a new permit for each production agreement entered into?

Only alternating proprietorships require both parties to obtain a production permit at each location where production will occur. Contract production and licensing agreements between two permitted parties do not require new Wisconsin production permits.

Who owes Wisconsin excise tax and reports the production to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue?

The answer varies depending on the type of agreement.

- Contract production – The person giving instructions, called the recipe producer, reports the volume and owes the applicable excise tax. Exception: If the Wisconsin producer performs contract production for an out-of-state recipe producer that is not required to obtain a production permit, the Wisconsin producer must report the production amounts on their Wisconsin tax return but does not owe tax on the amounts shipped outside Wisconsin.
- Alternating proprietorship – The tenant renting the space, called the guest producer, reports the volume and owes the applicable excise tax.
- Licensing agreement – The producer who uses the trademark or name and makes the alcohol beverages reports the volume and owes the applicable excise tax.

See these [contract production reporting FAQs](#) for some specific examples of reporting and tax payments.

How does a producer notify DAB of a new production agreement?

Email the Division at DORAlcoholPermits@wisconsin.gov to advise of any new production agreements, including the following information:

- Your producer's legal name and Wisconsin permit number
- The other party's legal name and Wisconsin permit number (if applicable)
- The location/address where production will take place
- Agreement type