



Washington State Liquor Control Board

Manufacturers, Importers, and Distributors
Non-Retail Division
Bulletin No 10-01

Date: August 9, 2010
To: Industry Members
Subject: Special Occasion Licensed Events

We are seeing an increase in Special Occasion (SO) Licensed Events. These are great marketing venues for your company. These events are held by non-profit groups that are mostly unaware of the liquor laws in Washington State. These non-profit groups receive a retail liquor license for the day. As we reach out to them, we realize the laws and rules can be very confusing, so we are asking you to help us educate them. To do this, we wanted to help our Industry Members by clarifying some of the key issues with you.

The biggest questions are “what can we do” or “what can’t we do” for a Special Occasion Licensee.

CAN do’s:

- Winery, Brewery and Distillery can donate product to a registered 501(C)(3) and 501(C)(6). Distilleries must purchase the spirits through the Liquor Control Board.
- Pay for advertising to 3rd party advertising vendors (publication companies, radio stations, etc...).
- Winery and Distillery can pour at a SO event. Breweries can only pour at a beer exhibition event.
- Unsold product can be returned to the Industry Member after the event for a refund.
- Must have an agent’s license if you’re representing at the event, a MAST permit is a great idea.

CANNOT do:

- Industry members cannot sponsor a Special Occasion Licensee.
- Give money to a SO licensee, or promoter thereof, in the form of booth fees.
- Distributors and beer/wine Importers cannot pour at an SO event.
- Employees/owners cannot drink or taste at a SO licensed event.
- No sales to the public by the manufacturer at a SO event.
- Distributors cannot donate product to a non-profit organization.
- Extend credit on product.

PO Box 43075, 3000 Pacific Ave. SE, Olympia WA 98504-3075, (360) 664-1600,
www.liq.wa.gov



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We are seeing a misuse in the Banquet permits. We are seeing companies (profit and non-profits) use Banquet Permits to run events that is open to the public. Please keep in mind that if tickets are sold to the public, there needs to be a Special Occasion license. When you are selling to or scheduled to be at an event please ensure that this is a Special Occasion Licensed event.

Thank You,

Jennifer Skoda, Captain
Washington State Liquor Control Board
360-664-1639.