



# Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board

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Date

Alcohol Industry Members, Licensees and Stakeholders

RE: Placement of alcohol products

To whom it may concern:

For several months prevention and public health stakeholders and other community members have been sharing with the Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB) concerns about access to and placement of alcohol products in retail stores. Before we consider actions to address the concerns, we want to make sure you are aware of the complaints we've been hearing. We would be interested in any suggestions you have for voluntary actions the industry could take or any information you want to provide the board.

## **The Issues**

We continue to hear complaints and concerns regarding retail practices that advocates believe hinder efforts to reduce underage alcohol use as well as adult misuse. Three primary concerns are easy access to products that can be concealed and stolen, products placed next to child-friendly items, and little distinction between products that contain alcohol and mimic those that do not, such as crossover products.

This isn't an issue unique to Washington State. The New York Times recently reported:

"These hard juices are supposed to be displayed with other alcoholic beverages in stores, but some people are concerned that they could be courting underage drinkers." (February 21, 2023)

## **Why This Is Important**

Preventing underage use and adult misuse of alcohol is a primary objective of our mission. We all are aware of the dangers of underage drinking, including the impact on the developing brain and the increased risk of poor decision-making, injury, and even death. Product confusion can also create increased risk when consumers are not aware a product contains alcohol.

## **What You Can Do**

We recognize there are actions you, our industry stakeholders, could adopt voluntarily. These include:

- Separate products containing alcohol from those without alcohol to prevent product confusion. Use signage to clearly identify products that contain alcohol.

- Keep all alcohol products in a separate section that is away from child-friendly items (such as candy and toys).
- Keep alcohol products away from areas with easy-to-access exits.
- Keep mini-bottles (airplane size) either behind a counter or in locked cabinets to prevent theft. Do not place them loosely in bins or baskets near check-out stands and exits.
- If using endcaps, do not include non-alcohol products in this area and use signage to indicate the products contain alcohol.
- Do not use endcaps located at the end of aisles with kid-friendly items.

## **Our Next Steps**

LCB staff will continue to monitor these concerns and explore potential next steps. If there is interest among industry representatives, I am more than happy to organize meetings to hear your thoughts and suggestions.

We remain committed to promoting public safety and would appreciate your participation in responsible alcohol sales related to product placement and marketing impacting youth.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts and suggestions. Let me know if you'd like to meet to discuss this issue. I can be reached at [David.Postman@lcb.wa.gov](mailto:David.Postman@lcb.wa.gov) or 360.664.1711.

Thank you for working with us.

Sincerely,



David Postman  
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Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board  
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