



# Washington State Liquor Control Board

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May 11, 2010

## **Please Read: Important Information About Outdoor Alcohol Advertising**

Dear Licensee,

We are writing to inform you of a significant change to the alcohol advertising rules that affect all retail liquor licensed locations in Washington. The new rules restrict the size and number of outdoor alcohol advertising.

### **New Rules Became Effective April 3, 2010**

The new rules apply to any business or organization with a retail liquor license including stores, bars, taverns and restaurants in Washington. Key elements include:

- **Four Signs.** The rules limit to four the number of signs advertising alcohol brand names and manufacturers that are affixed or hanging in the window or on the outside of the premises visible from the right of way. The rule does not apply to the business trade name or neon or other signs that are visible from the outside but intended to reach inside patrons.
- **1,600 Square Inches.** The rules restrict the size of signs advertising alcohol brands or manufacturers visible from the outside of licensed premises to 1,600 square inches (equivalent to 32" x 50").
- **Clarifying Proximity.** The rules clarify the distance from schools, places of worship, playgrounds or athletic fields where advertising is allowed by replacing the former term "close proximity" with the new "500 feet." Advertising is allowed within 500 feet if neither the administrative body nor local authority (typically the mayor) objects.
- **Civic Events.** The rules apply to signs at civic events where alcohol is served, such as beer gardens.

### **Board Action based on Extensive Input**

The revised rules are based on extensive public input from citizens seeking to minimize youth exposure to advertising. The comments stretched the rulemaking process from a typical four-month span to well over one year. In addition to citizen comments, the Board considered and incorporated input from industry groups including the Washington Restaurant Association, the Washington Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association and the Washington Association of Neighborhood Stores.

### **Education before Enforcement**

The Board recognizes that is a significant change for some businesses. Our liquor enforcement officers will not be writing violations for advertising violations until licensees are educated on the change and have had the opportunity to comply.

As always, please visit the Liquor Control Board Web site at [www.liq.wa.gov](http://www.liq.wa.gov) for information on rules, new laws and other relevant information. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Sharon Foster  
Chair

Ruthann Kurose  
Board member