



New NWT Liquor Regulations

What's Changing for the Public

A plain-language guide to what the proposed Liquor Regulations would change.

*All figures and dates below are **proposed** and may change. Section references are to the new Liquor Act (Bill 83, assented 2023) and the proposed Liquor Regulations (draft). Where this guide and the legislation differ, the legislation governs.*

Why we're sharing this

In short. The new Liquor Act has passed but is not yet in force. It will take effect when these regulations are finalized. This guide provides a high-level overview of the main proposed changes for the public. It highlights the main changes for the public, so you can tell us what you think before the rules apply. Each change refers to the section behind it, so you can go directly to it in the regulations instead of working through every section. Things that are staying the same are not repeated here.

How to comment. [Complete the survey today.](#) Responses will be accepted until October 16, 2026. All feedback will be reviewed and considered, though not every suggestion can be adopted.

What is staying the same

The legal age stays **19**. The rules on drinking in public places and on public intoxication carry over (Act, ss. 72, 74). If you are hosting an event where liquor will be served, see the separate guide on permits.

1. Serving rules

Proposed. The current rule limiting patrons to one additional drink beyond the one they are consuming would be removed. Instead, the proposed regulations set clear maximum serving sizes for:

- a maximum amount of spirits per drink per patron,
- set pitcher and decanter sizes,
- and defined sizes for tasting flights.

Tasting flights, samples, and on-site tasting rooms at local producers would be allowed (Regs, ss. 27-31).

What it means for you. You may see options like flights and pitchers that were not clearly allowed before. The rules that protect patrons remain the same: servers still cannot serve anyone who is intoxicated, and the maximum serving sizes apply.

2. Where you can buy

Now. Liquor is sold to the public through the liquor stores.



Proposed. Retail options would expand beyond liquor stores. There may be smaller outlets (called Secondary Vendors in the new Regulations), such as a dedicated wine store, and N.W.T. producers can sell their own products directly to the public. The Commission still purchases and supplies what is stocked, so the range of products is not changing; where you can buy them may. (Regs, ss. –171-176).

What it means for you. Over time you may be able to buy liquor in more places. Liquor stores will remain the point of sale for licence holders, permit holders and Secondary Vendors.

3. A clearer personal importation allowance

Now. You could bring liquor into the N.W.T. for personal use, with an importation certificate required above a set amount.

Proposed. You can bring in up to 1.2 litres of "alcohol volume" (the container size multiplied by its alcohol percentage) without an importation certificate. Above that, you need a certificate and pay per-litre fees (Regs, ss. –180-181).

What it means for you. The 1.2-litre allowance applies no matter how the liquor reaches you. There are two ways to bring liquor into the NWT for personal use: order it through the NTLCC or bring it back yourself (for example by car or plane). Either way, above 1.2 litres of "alcohol volume" you need an importation certificate, and you can never sell liquor you import.

Example:

1. The liquor store doesn't have my favourite wine; I want to order it.

If I order a quantity under 1.2 L of alcohol volume, I don't need an importation certificate, I will simply contact the Liquor Commission and place my order.

If I want to order more than 1.2L of alcohol volume, I still have to contact the Commission to order, and they will also issue an importation certificate.

In both cases my order is delivered to the liquor store closest to my home address. I can go and pick it up or have it delivered to my community if my community is not restricted or prohibited.

2. I've been travelling by car around BC and touring some excellent wineries; I bring some of the wine home to share with friends when they come for dinner.

If I bring back less than 1.2 L of alcohol volume, I don't need an importation certificate.

If I bring back more than 1.2 L of alcohol volume, I need an importation certificate even if the liquor is with me.



4. Fees if you import above the allowance

Proposed. Above the allowance, per-litre fees apply: beer **\$0.70**, Cider or Coolers \$1.75, wine **\$7.02**, and spirits **\$8.77** per litre of the beverage (Regs, s. 181 and Schedule).

What it means for you. If you bring in more than the personal allowance, expect a per-litre charge that depends on the type of drink.

What happens next

After the engagement period closes, all feedback will be reviewed and considered. The regulations will then be finalized, and the *Act* and *Regulations* are expected to come into force together.

This guide is a plain-language summary of proposed changes only. Where it differs from the legislation, the official Liquor Act and Liquor Regulations govern.