

Alcohol Service Permits

OLCC's alcohol service permits are designed to ensure that only eligible, trained people manage alcohol service, and sell or serve alcoholic beverages at OLCC-licensed businesses that allow on-premises alcohol consumption.

Responsible alcohol service

Serving alcohol is a serious business. Responsible alcohol service ensures that Oregon restaurants, bars, and taverns watch out for the safety of their customers, neighbors, and communities. A decision to refuse alcohol sales to underage customers or intoxicated persons can literally be a life-or-death decision. Oregon law recognizes the importance of responsible alcohol service by requiring an alcohol service permit for people who sell or serve alcohol to customers at restaurants, taverns, bars, and other businesses where customers can legally drink alcoholic beverages. People who manage alcohol servers are also required to have a permit. Servers must be at least 18 years old, but are limited in their duties until they are 21. Currently, there are more than 120,000 licensed alcohol servers (permittees) in Oregon, and this year the OLCC expects to process more than 35,000 service permit applications.

Simple application process

The application process is simple. A person applies for a permit by completing a form that includes identifying information and questions about any criminal or drunk-driving convictions that the applicant may have. People who have not previously had an alcohol service permit application denied or a service permit canceled are allowed to work as alcohol servers as soon as they have completed an application and it has been endorsed by their employer. The employer is responsible for immediately sending the completed application to the OLCC.

Background checks

The OLCC reviews the applications to ensure that applicants are eligible, and conducts background checks to verify that applicants have accurately reported their criminal history. Not every person qualifies for an alcohol service permit. People who have recent or multiple convictions for driving under the influence of intoxicants (DUII), violating liquor laws, felony drug crimes, felony crimes of violence, or felony driving while suspended or revoked may not qualify for a service permit. In addition, persons who have a habit of abusing alcohol or controlled substances may not qualify for a permit, unless they can establish that they are no longer using these substances, and are participating in or have completed a state-approved alcohol or drug treatment program, and have completed any parole or probation requirements. If the OLCC proposes to deny an application, the applicant has the right to an administrative hearing to contest the agency's action.

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Promoting Responsible Alcohol Sales and Service

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Alcohol server education course and test

All applicants must take an OLCC-approved alcohol server education course and pass a test no later than 45 days after the OLCC receives their application. A possible extension of the 45-day time limit may exist for people living in counties with a population under 100,000, if they can demonstrate that circumstances beyond their control prevented them from completing the course. The course teaches students about Oregon's alcohol service laws and covers key concepts of responsible alcohol sales and service, including recognizing signs of intoxication, checking identification, and preventing alcohol sales to minors and intoxicated persons. At the end of the course, students demonstrate their knowledge of the course materials by taking a scored exam.

Results and renewals

Applicants who meet the eligibility requirements for a permit, take the alcohol server education course, and pass the exam are issued an alcohol service permit. The permit is valid for five years. Applicants who have taken and passed the initial class within the past seven years may renew their service permit by either repeating the initial class or taking a renewal course. The passing exam score is higher for a renewal course.

Public safety

The alcohol server education course increases an alcohol server's awareness of the problems associated with alcohol over-service and abuse, and gives the server information and skills needed to sell and serve alcohol responsibly. Trained servers are less likely to sell to minors or intoxicated persons, and are better able to detect and prevent alcohol-related problems. Permittees who violate liquor laws are subject to OLCC administrative penalties. These penalties range from written reprimands to fines, or the suspension or cancellation of a service permit. Eligibility requirements for holding a permit help the OLCC ensure that people who serve alcohol are likely to follow alcohol laws and rules. As a result, the vast majority of OLCC-licensed businesses sell alcohol safely and responsibly, and do not create problems for their customers, neighbors or communities.

For more information contact:

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