Handbook for Serving Alcoholic Beverages

Perho Pro study material for the alcohol passport exam

This is an edited, easy-to-read version of the Finnish Supervisory Agency's guide Serving of alcoholic beverages (LVV-S/82385/2026, published 3/11/2026). The handbook explains, in simpler language, the parts of the guide that are covered in the Perho Pro alcohol passport exam.

An edited version of the Finnish Supervisory Agency's guide Serving of alcoholic beverages (LVV-S/82385/2026, published 3/11/2026) is attached at the end of the handbook. The parts of the guide that relate directly to the alcohol passport exam are marked in bold. The Perho Pro exam is based on these bold parts of the guide. They are the same topics that are covered in this handbook.

The parts that are not in bold are not necessary for the Perho Pro alcohol passport exam. However, it is a good idea to read them. They may contain background information or other topics related to serving alcohol, such as applying for a serving licence and the marketing of alcoholic beverages.

The Perho Pro alcohol passport exam has 32 multiple-choice questions. To pass the exam, at least 80% of your answers must be correct.

The exam is taken on computers in the exam room.

Example exam question

A customer has paid for a beer in advance with the restaurant's mobile app. When the customer comes to collect the drink at the counter, they are clearly intoxicated. The waiter

a) hands over the beer because it has already been paid for

b) hands over the beer if the customer promises to drink it slowly

c) does not hand over the beer because alcohol must not be served to a person who is clearly intoxicated

d) hands over the beer but does not sell the customer any more drinks

The correct answer is c. Payment does not have to take place at the same time as the drink is handed over, but compliance with the serving prohibitions must always be checked before the drink is handed over, even if it has been paid for in advance.

Practical rules for serving alcohol

Definitions

Alcoholic beverage

An alcoholic beverage is a drink that contains more than 1.2% and no more than 80% alcohol by volume.

A mild alcoholic beverage contains no more than 22% alcohol.

For example, beer, cider, long drinks and wine.

A strong alcoholic beverage contains more than 22% alcohol.

For example, spirits such as vodka, gin, whisky and cognac.

The retail sale and serving of alcohol require a licence. Alcoholic beverages containing more than 2.8% alcohol may not be sold without a licence. No licence is needed to sell or serve alcoholic beverages containing no more than 2.8% alcohol.

Alcoholic preparations

Solid alcoholic preparations include, for example, chocolate sweets and ice cream that contain alcohol. If a preparation contains more than 2.8% alcohol by weight, the same rules apply to it as to alcoholic beverages, such as age limits, and serving it requires a licence.

Good practice

The serving of alcoholic beverages must not be contrary to good practice. An action is contrary to good practice if it is clearly at odds with generally accepted social values, and especially if it approves of, or is indifferent to, endangering health when under the influence of alcohol.

Actions contrary to good practice may include, for example:

- encouraging customers to drink large amounts of alcohol (for example, drinking competitions where large amounts are drunk quickly, or serving on the basis of “drink as much as you want” for a certain price)
- selling alcohol or allowing it to be consumed in unusual ways (for example, by absorption through mucous membranes or by inhalation)

- serving alcohol on credit, for example to vulnerable consumer groups.

It is not necessarily contrary to good practice to charge, for example, a package price for a meal and the alcoholic beverages included in it.

Serving and the licensed area

The licensed serving of alcoholic beverages means selling alcoholic beverages for consumption on premises controlled by the seller or under supervision organised by the seller.

The retail sale of alcoholic beverages means selling alcoholic beverages for consumption elsewhere than on premises controlled by the seller or under supervision organised by the seller.

A licensed area is an area where customers are allowed to consume served alcoholic beverages. **A licensed premises** is the totality of the licensed area(s) and other premises, such as the kitchen, toilet facilities and storage rooms.

Alcoholic beverages may only be served by handing them over to the customer in a licensed area approved by the

licensing authority.

These definitions mean that, in serving, alcoholic beverages may only be sold in opened packages or dispensed into glasses, and they are consumed in the seller's licensed area. As an exception, unopened packages may be provided to a traveller in an accommodation room and to closed groups in the licence holder's meeting room or sauna. In this case, the amount of beverages available must be limited according to the number of customers and the requirements for supervision.

Alcoholic beverages may not be served as self-service, that is, so that the customer takes the drink themselves without a customer service interaction with the seller. Accommodation rooms and the meeting and sauna facilities of closed groups are exceptions to this.

Another consequence is that a customer may not take served drinks outside the licensed area. The licensed area must be clearly limited or marked if its boundaries are not otherwise clearly visible. An exception is transporting drinks between separate licensed areas of the same licensed premises, for example from the bar counter to an outdoor licensed area when there is a public sidewalk

between them. This is only possible if the licensing authority has allowed it when approving the licensed area, and the procedure is described in the self-monitoring plan.

The licence holder and staff may take an alcoholic beverage, together with its container, from a customer who has taken it outside the licensed area or brought it in without permission, and dispose of it.

If the licensed premises has a retail sales licence (fermented beverages with no more than 8% alcohol and other beverages with no more than 5.5% alcohol in sealed packages), the licensed premises must make sure that alcoholic beverages sold as retail are not consumed in the licensed premises or in its immediate vicinity. Takeaway drinks bought by a customer can be stored, for example, in the cloakroom.

Only alcoholic beverages legally procured for serving may be sold and consumed in the licensed premises.

Quantities of alcoholic beverages sold

If an alcoholic beverage is sold as measured servings, it must be available to the customer in the following basic portions:

- The basic portion of a strong alcoholic beverage is 4 centilitres
- The basic portion of a mild alcoholic beverage with more than 15% but not more than 22% alcohol by volume is 8 centilitres
- The basic portion of a mild alcoholic beverage with more than 8% but not more than 15% alcohol by volume is 12 centilitres
- The basic portion of other mild alcoholic beverages (no more than 8%) is 33 centilitres

The Alcohol Act does not limit the maximum number of portions served at one time.

If the licensed premises sells more than four basic portions to one customer at a time, the maximum serving portions must be specified in the self-monitoring plan.

Payment for an alcoholic beverage does not have to take place at the same time as the drink is handed over. However, compliance with the serving prohibitions must always be checked before the drink is handed over, even if it has been paid for in advance, for example online.

Prohibitions on selling and consuming alcoholic beverages

Alcoholic beverages may not be sold or otherwise provided in serving:

- to a person under the age of 18
- to a person who is visibly intoxicated or behaves in a disorderly manner
- if there is a justified reason to assume that the alcoholic beverage will be illegally delivered or supplied to others.

These persons are also not permitted to possess or consume alcoholic beverages in the licensed premises.

Young customers

Alcoholic beverages may not be sold in serving or in retail sale to a person under the age of 18.

Before handing over an alcoholic beverage, the seller must always check the customer's age if there is any reason to suspect that the customer is under the age of 18 based on their appearance or other factors. The seller must also check that the photo on the document is of the customer.

Age is proven with an official photo ID. The document may be issued by Finnish or foreign authorities. The important thing is that it does not appear easy to forge and that it reliably shows the person's age.

Acceptable documents include, for example:

- passport
- identity card
- driving licence
- alien's passport
- refugee travel document.

The document may also be digital. **A Kela card or a student ID is not acceptable** as proof of age. If the document is clearly fake, the seller may notify the police.

ID checks must not be restricted to only some customers on discriminatory grounds, such as national origin.

The Alcohol Act does not prohibit the presence of minors on licensed premises. However, the licence holder may set an age limit for the licensed premises. The licensed premises must make sure that minors cannot consume alcoholic beverages.

Other customers (including the parents of minors) must not give alcoholic beverages to minors in the licensed area.

An employee selling alcohol must check the age of a customer who looks young themselves, even if the security guards have already checked it at the door. The licence holder is responsible for ensuring that minors do not receive alcohol in the licensed premises, and it is the staff's task to supervise this. An employee who has sold alcohol to a minor may also receive a personal penalty.

An exception to the entry of minors is an 18+ spectator area. These can exist in the spectator areas of sports, exercise, music or other similar events. Minors must not be allowed into these areas when alcohol is being served there.

Customers' own alcoholic beverages

In a licensed area, only alcoholic beverages sold by the holder of the serving licence may be consumed. The serving and consumption of a customer's own alcoholic beverages in licensed premises is always prohibited. Without a serving licence, alcoholic beverages may also not be consumed in a restaurant or other place where

food or refreshments are made available to the public, or at a public event. The owner of the premises, the organiser of the event or the security guard must not allow such consumption.

For example, at a wedding held in a restaurant, it is not permitted to consume champagne brought by a customer as a wedding toast. Only alcoholic beverages legally purchased for serving can be consumed.

If a customer has their own alcoholic beverages with them when they arrive at the licensed premises, the beverages must be stored reliably in a place that can be supervised and clearly separate from the served beverages and the alcohol storage. Such a place may be, for example, a guarded cloakroom or a separate lockable room or cabinet in the licensed premises.

Intoxicated or disorderly customers

Intoxication is usually clearly visible if:

- the person has difficulty fixing their eyes on something or has a glazed look in their eyes
- the person behaves disorderly and loudly and is overly confident

- the person has difficulty understanding things and what another person is communicating
- the person's movements are unsure and clumsy, they have difficulty grabbing objects, and their reflexes are slow
- the person spills their drink and has difficulty bringing the glass to their mouth
- the person staggers and cannot walk straight, or falls without support
- the person's speech is slurred and no longer understandable
- the person is incoherent or has difficulty controlling their emotions
- the person is slumped over, may easily fall asleep, or has passed out/is sleeping
- the person is feeling sick.

A person who is clearly intoxicated has a significantly impaired ability to make sound judgements. Their behaviour cannot be anticipated and is unpredictable. They may cause a disturbance, for example, by taking another customer's drink.

The characteristics of intoxication are always evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The characteristics may also be caused by an illness, injury or disability, and applying them must not result in discrimination based on an illness, injury or disability.

Disorderly behaviour can show itself, for example, as defiance, aggression or violence. Alcohol must not be sold to a customer who behaves in a disorderly manner.

A customer who is clearly intoxicated must not be allowed into licensed premises.

If a customer in the licensed premises is nevertheless clearly intoxicated, they must not be sold alcohol and they may no longer consume alcoholic beverages. A customer who is clearly intoxicated **must be removed** from the licensed premises.

If a customer cannot take care of themselves because of severe intoxication, staff must make sure that the customer leaves safely, for example by ordering a taxi for them. If necessary, the police can be contacted.

The customer may wait for the taxi under supervision, for example in the entrance area of the licensed premises.

Serving hours

If the licensed premises has a retail sales licence, alcoholic beverages may be sold and handed over to customers under that licence between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.

The normal serving hours for alcoholic beverages with more than 2.8% alcohol are from 9 a.m. to 1:30 a.m., unless the licence decision limits the serving time. On the eve of Independence Day, New Year's Eve, the eve of May Day and Midsummer Eve, serving can continue until 3 a.m. without separate extended hours.

With an extended hours notification, the licensed premises may sell alcoholic beverages **indoors** until 4 a.m. **In outdoor areas**, continuing to serve after 1:30 a.m. requires an extended hours licence granted by the licensing authority.

Serving may not continue after 1:30 a.m. in a shared licensed area of two or more licence holders. However, the licence may state that after 1:30 a.m. the area is used by only one licence holder, who can then continue serving in accordance with the provisions on extended serving hours.

An accommodation business may be granted a licence to start serving at 7 a.m. at the earliest in connection with its breakfast service.

Serving hours do not apply to minibar service in accommodation rooms that are part of the licensed area. If alcoholic beverages are taken to a hotel room as room service, the serving hours must be observed.

Customers may consume the alcoholic beverages they have bought for one hour after the end of serving hours. The restaurant does not need to be closed after this, but alcoholic beverages may not be consumed after the set time limits. The restaurant may, of course, sell other products at that time.

When summer time begins, extended hours serving must stop at 4 a.m. summer time (3 a.m. winter time) at the latest. When winter time begins, serving can continue until 4 a.m. winter time (5 a.m. summer time) at the latest.

The authorities may restrict serving hours if serving causes, or is likely to cause, disturbance to residents in the surrounding area.

If the licensed premises sells alcoholic beverages after 1:30 a.m., there must be one security guard for each

hundred customers or part thereof. The security guards' task is to monitor order and safety at the licensed premises and in its immediate vicinity from 1:30 a.m. until the customers' consumption of alcoholic beverages ends. A security guard may also perform other tasks at the same time, provided that this does not compromise the maintenance of order. For justified reasons, the licensing authority may reduce the requirement or remove it.

Staff, supervision and maintenance of order

A person who is at least 18 years old may work in serving duties. A person who has turned 16 may serve alcoholic beverages only under the immediate supervision of the responsible manager or another assigned person who is **over the age of 18**. An employee under 16 years of age may accept orders of alcoholic beverages but may not sell, dispense or hand over alcoholic beverages to customers.

A licensed premises must have sufficient staff to ensure effective supervision and the maintenance of order, taking into account the scope and nature of the operations.

The licence holder and their staff must monitor compliance with the prohibitions and obligations of the Alcohol Act and maintain order in the licensed

premises. The staff's duties include, for example, monitoring customers' age and intoxication and making sure that alcoholic beverages are not taken outside the licensed area. A waiter who sells alcohol to a minor or to a person who is clearly intoxicated may receive a criminal sanction, such as a fine.

A person can work in alcohol sales even without an alcohol passport. However, the law states that the staff must know their obligations under the Alcohol Act and the self-monitoring plan, and the licence holder must keep a record of the staff's training and skills. An alcohol passport ensures that the employee has the necessary knowledge and reduces the supervision workload of the responsible manager.

A person selling alcoholic beverages or taking part in supervising the serving of alcoholic beverages must not be under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances when on duty.

Responsible manager

When the licensed premises is open to customers, a responsible manager or another person appointed by the licence holder for this task must be present as the

representative of the licence holder. This person is responsible for making sure that alcoholic beverages are served in accordance with the law.

From 3 January 2027, the responsible manager must be present when the licensed premises is open to customers and alcoholic beverages containing more than 2.8% alcohol may be sold or consumed there.

A responsible manager must be appointed for the entire duration of the opening hours, and the staff working must know who this person is at any given time.

The supervision of serving must be organised so that the responsible manager can effectively monitor the serving and intervene in it if necessary.

There are two competence requirements for a responsible manager:

- at least 18 years old
- an alcohol passport (a certificate demonstrating knowledge of the Alcohol Act) or a corresponding degree certificate.

The licence holder must keep a record of the alcohol passports or degree certificates of the persons working as

responsible managers, for example by keeping copies of them or by keeping a list of the certificates that have been checked.

Qualifications as a responsible manager and alcohol passports obtained under the previous Alcohol Act are still valid and are accepted as proof of competence.

Alcohol passport

The certificate demonstrating knowledge of the Alcohol Act, that is, the alcohol passport, is issued by a vocational education and training provider or a university of applied sciences that provides training in the restaurant industry. The alcohol passport must follow the model approved by the Finnish Supervisory Agency.

The certificate is granted to a person who has successfully passed the alcohol passport exam.

A basic degree in the restaurant and catering industry, a vocational qualification in restaurant customer service and a university of applied sciences degree in the tourism and catering industry from an educational institution that organises the exams are considered to correspond to passing the alcohol passport exam, if the degree includes knowledge of the topics covered in the exam.

An alcohol passport is valid indefinitely, meaning it does not expire and does not need to be renewed. The Finnish Supervisory Agency does not keep a register of alcohol passports. If the passport is lost, a copy can be requested from the educational institution that issued it.

Self-monitoring of serving

The holder of the serving licence has the main responsibility for ensuring that the Alcohol Act is complied with in serving. This is why the licence holder must have a written self-monitoring plan, which it complies with, keeps up to date and keeps records of. The plan and the serving licence must be available to the staff and the supervisory authorities.

The staff must know the content of the serving licence and their obligations under the Alcohol Act and the self-monitoring plan. The licence holder must make sure that the staff are introduced to the plan.

The self-monitoring plan describes, for example:

- the duties of the responsible manager and the number and duties of the staff
- how compliance with age limits is ensured

- how serving to intoxicated or disorderly customers is prevented
- how the licensed area is supervised and how drinks are transported from one licensed area to another
- how order is maintained during extended serving hours
- the maximum serving portions and the practices for sales on credit
- how the staff's competence is ensured.

Supervision by the authorities

The Finnish Supervisory Agency supervises serving. Supervisory visits are conducted both as scheduled and without advance warning. The inspector introduces themselves to the representative of the licence holder by showing their official ID card and always draws up an inspection report for the visit.

The police may prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages for the duration of the current serving time at most, if the staff of the licensed premises are unable to maintain order in the premises.

For violations, the licence holder may be given a warning or ordered to pay a penalty payment. In the most serious cases, the licence may be revoked for a fixed period or permanently.

Different types of serving licences and licensed areas

All serving licences have in common that they require a self-monitoring plan and that other business operators, for example a company selling food, may also operate in the licence holder's licensed area. The licence is always specific to each trader and premises: if a restaurant moves to a new address or the trader (business ID) changes, a new serving licence must be applied for.

The boundaries of the licensed area must always be marked separately if they are not otherwise clearly visible.

Serving licence for licensed premises

A serving licence may be granted for specific licensed premises whose licensed areas have been approved by the licensing authority.

However, two or more serving licence holders may operate in the same licensed area if all of them have applied for a licence and one of the licence holders is responsible for supervising the area. Such areas may exist, for example, in shopping centres. Serving may not continue after 1:30 a.m. in a shared licensed area.

The licensed area to be approved must be of such size and structure that it can be supervised by the authorities and the licence holder. Outdoor areas (that is, terraces) can also be included in the licensed area.

18+ spectator area

A general spectator area of a sports, exercise, music or other similar event may not be approved as a licensed area. However, an 18+ spectator area can be separated from the spectator area, and the licensing authority may approve it as a licensed area. Customers under the age of 18 must not be allowed into such an area when alcohol is being served there.

At other times and at other events, the same physical spectator area can be used as a normal spectator area where no alcohol is served. In that case, there is of course no need to restrict the entry of minors to the area.

Event, meeting and party venue

An event, meeting and party venue and a corresponding area may be approved as a licensed area upon application by the owner or holder of the venue or area. Alcoholic beverages can then be served in the venue when needed. The provisions on serving only apply in the area when

serving notified to the licensing authority is taking place there.

In such an approved licensed area, serving may only be carried out by an operator who already has a valid serving licence.

Serving without own licensed premises

A serving licence may also be granted to an applicant who does not have licensed premises. In that case, the licence holder may serve alcoholic beverages in event, meeting and party venues and corresponding areas that have been approved in advance as licensed areas. This kind of licence is useful, for example, for a catering company.

Serving in travel services

Travel service companies that organise, for pre-designated groups, for example experiential, wilderness hiking or safari services that take place in nature and follow pre-planned routes, may serve alcoholic beverages in licensed areas along the routes that have been approved in advance.

Serving can be notified for the planned routes with one notification for a maximum of one year at a time. This

means that serving on each trip does not need to be notified separately.

A self-monitoring plan for serving is also required for this activity.

APPENDIX

Serving of alcoholic beverages (edited)

Based on the publication: Finnish Supervisory Agency guide
Journal number LVV-S/82385/2026
Published 3/11/2026

Perho Pro editing notes: This is an edited version of the text of the Finnish Supervisory Agency's guide *Serving of alcoholic beverages*. The content of the guide has not been changed. Only this note and the bold formatting have been added.

The parts in bold are covered in the Perho Pro *Handbook for Serving Alcoholic Beverages* (2026), and questions on them may be asked in the Perho Pro alcohol passport exam. Text that is not in bold is not part of the exam.

1 Introduction

According to the Alcohol Act (1102/2017), the Finnish Supervisory Agency will act as the national authority for the licensing and supervision of the licensed serving of alcoholic beverages from 1 January 2026, with the exception of Åland. In addition, the Finnish Supervisory Agency supervises the retail sale and marketing of alcoholic beverages. The Finnish Supervisory Agency has been given all the official duties related to the Alcohol Act that were previously the responsibility of the regional state administrative agencies and Valvira.

This guide addresses key topics related to the serving of alcoholic beverages and calls attention to legislation and other directions related to licensed serving. The guide is intended for use by companies, employees and students in the industry.

The guide compiles the regulations and their interpretation concerning the serving of alcoholic beverages, and it has been developed in collaboration with the Finnish Hospitality Association (MaRa ry).

The purpose of the guide is to improve the fulfilment of the general objectives of the Alcohol Act and clarify the

Alcohol Act's provisions and interpretation to industry operators as well as to function as study material for alcohol passport exams. The content relevant to the alcohol passport exam is found in chapters 2–4 of the guide.

The Åland Province can make exceptions to the rules on serving alcohol with the Provincial Administration Act, so the guide cannot be applied in full in the Åland Province.

The guidelines replace the Finnish Supervisory Agency's instructions on the serving of alcoholic beverages LVV-S/60080/2026. The update of the guidelines has taken into account the amendments to the Alcohol Act that entered into force on 3 November 2026 and, where necessary, the amendments that will enter into force on 3 January 2027.

2 Licensed serving of alcohol

The purpose of the Alcohol Act is to reduce the consumption of alcoholic substances by limiting and supervising the related business activities to prevent alcohol's detrimental effects on its users, other people and society as a whole (Section 1 of the Alcohol Act). One of these restricted and controlled forms of business activity is the serving of alcoholic beverages.

This chapter presents the requirements of alcohol legislation concerning the serving of alcoholic beverages. Chapter 5 provides a more detailed description of serving alcohol and the closely related alcohol licenses and notifications, as well as the related procedures.

2.1 Alcoholic beverage

In the Alcohol Act, an alcoholic beverage is defined as any substance or product containing more than 1.2 per cent ethyl alcohol by volume. An alcoholic beverage means an alcoholic substance intended for drinking that contains no more than 80 per cent ethyl alcohol by volume. (Section 3 of the Alcohol Act.) **An alcoholic beverage thus contains more than 1.2 per cent and no more than 80 per cent of alcohol by volume.**

A mild alcoholic beverage is defined as an alcoholic beverage containing no more than 22 per cent ethyl alcohol by volume. A strong alcoholic beverage is an alcoholic beverage containing more than 22 per cent ethyl alcohol by volume. (Section 3 of the Alcohol Act.)

2.2 Licensing requirements for serving alcohol

The licensed serving of alcoholic beverages refers to the selling of alcoholic beverages for consumption on premises controlled by the seller or under supervision organised by the seller (Section 3 of the Alcohol Act).

Alcoholic beverages with more than 2.8% alcohol may not be sold, brokered, or handed over for a fee without a licence (Sections 5, 6 and 84 of the Alcohol Act). The alcohol serving licence and the rights included in it may not be sold or otherwise transferred, in whole or in part, to another party (Section 10 of the Alcohol Act). Only the holder of an alcohol serving licence may sell alcoholic beverages intended for serving.

Before starting the serving of alcohol, a licence must be applied for and obtained from the licensing authority. **The licence is specific to each trader and premises** (Sections

10 and 18 of the Alcohol Act). **If a restaurant moves to a new address or the trader (business ID) changes, a new alcohol serving licence must be applied for. An alcohol serving licence may also be granted to an applicant who does not have licensed premises if the serving is intended to be carried out in the licensed area of licensed premises approved in advance by notification** (Sections 19 and 20 of the Alcohol Act). **In a licensed area, only alcoholic beverages sold by the holder of the alcohol licence may be consumed** (Section 36 of the Alcohol Act).

One of the conditions for an alcohol serving licence is a self-monitoring plan (Section 18 of the Alcohol Act). **A self-monitoring plan refers to a licence holder's written plan to ensure the legality of their activities** (Section 56 of the Alcohol Act).

If a licence holder decides to materially change the nature or extent of their activities so that the licence issued to it no longer covers the altered activities, the licence holder must apply for a change to the licence prior to the change. No changes may be carried out until the licensing authority has approved the change to the licence. (Section 11 of the Alcohol Act.)

2.2.1 Assessing the need for a license

Serving alcoholic beverages for consumption at various events or in connection with services may require an alcohol serving licence. When assessing the need for an alcohol serving licence, the following factors must be taken into account:

- **Alcoholic beverages with an alcohol content exceeding 2.8% may not be sold without a licence** (Sections 5 and 6 of the Alcohol Act). Alcoholic beverages may also not be passed on or handed over in exchange for a fee without permission (Section 84 of the Alcohol Act). Without an alcohol serving licence, it is prohibited, for example, for a person who has obtained alcoholic beverages to receive a reward for passing them on to others for consumption. It is forbidden to accept money as a reward, but it is also forbidden to accept, for example, an object or a service as a reward for the passing on or handing over of alcoholic beverages.
- Offering alcoholic beverages in exchange for payment or as a complementary product with a service or good in business activities requires an alcohol serving licence. The rules on the sale of alcohol also apply to

the passing on and delivery of alcoholic substances in business activities in exchange for remuneration and in connection with passing on and delivering alcoholic substances marketed in connection with other goods or services (Section 3 of the Alcohol Act). A trader who does not have an alcohol serving licence may not provide an alcoholic beverage to a customer if obtaining it would require the customer to purchase another product or service or provide other consideration.

Serving alcoholic beverages in connection with a paid service requires an alcohol serving licence. For example, a hairdresser cannot offer an alcoholic drink to a customer in connection with a hairdressing service without a licence.

In principle, the serving of alcohol is subject to a licence even if, for example, the organiser of a wine tasting purchases the alcoholic beverages and charges for them directly or as part of other fees.

- **In certain places and situations, it is prohibited to consume alcoholic beverages with an alcohol content exceeding 2.8%, unless an alcohol serving licence has been granted. Alcoholic beverages may**

not be consumed without an alcohol serving licence in a restaurant or other place where food or refreshments are made available to the public for a fee. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is also prohibited without an alcohol serving licence in a public event as defined in the Assembly Act. The owner of the premises, the organiser of the event, or the security guard may not allow the consumption of alcoholic beverages in the premises or at the event. (Section 85 of the Alcohol Act.)

In the Assembly Act (530/1999), public events refer to "events, competitions, performances and other similar events that are open to the public and which cannot be considered public meetings". An event is a public event when it is open to anyone, either free of charge or by purchasing a ticket. Participation in a public event does not require a separate invitation or membership in a particular community. A public meeting, or so-called demonstration, is not a public event.

Alcoholic beverages that are not served under an alcohol serving licence may not be consumed on the indoor or outdoor premises of a retail outlet under the control of

the holder of a retail sale licence, nor in the immediate vicinity of this area (Section 35 of the Alcohol Act).

- Organising catering events requires an alcohol serving licence if the catering company procures alcoholic beverages for the event at the organiser's request and charges a fee for supplying or serving the alcoholic beverages. Catering events can generally be organised without an alcohol serving licence if the organiser of the event purchases the alcoholic beverages for the event themselves and the catering company only serves them along with other food and beverages. A catering company may charge the event organiser for the use of staff, for example, at an hourly rate.

However, if a catering company has an apartment under its control where the company regularly provides paid catering services and events, it is considered a restaurant, and an alcohol serving licence must be obtained for the alcohol served there.

The police are the competent authority in drawing the line between public and private events and in investigating any violations when the operator does not have an alcohol serving licence. The penal provisions applicable to the unlawful sale and supply of alcohol are provided in

Chapter 50a of the Criminal Code of Finland 39/1889. A person who sells, supplies or otherwise delivers an alcoholic beverage to another party contrary to the Alcohol Act may be sentenced to a fine or imprisonment for an alcohol offence. The proceeds of the crime are forfeited to the State as provided in the Criminal Code of Finland.

In addition, the Alcohol Act regulates alcohol offences. It may be an alcohol offence, for example, if the owner of the premises, the organiser of the event, or the security guard intentionally allows the consumption of an alcoholic beverage with more than 2.8% alcohol content in violation of the Alcohol Act in a place where the consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited. (Section 90 of the Alcohol Act.)

2.3 Staff

A licensed premises must have sufficient staff to ensure effective supervision and the maintenance of order, taking into account the scope and nature of the operations. A licence holder and their staff must monitor compliance with the prohibitions and obligations stipulated in the Alcohol Act and maintain

order in the licensed premises. (Sections 38 and 39 of the Alcohol Act.)

The self-monitoring plan must include a plan for the number of personnel and their tasks, for monitoring compliance with the prohibitions and obligations stipulated in the Alcohol Act, and for maintaining order in the licensed area during serving hours (Section 3 of the Decree of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on Enforcement of the Alcohol Act 158/2018, (StmA)).

A person must be at least 18 years old to work in serving duties independently. A person who has turned 16 may sell alcoholic beverages only under the immediate supervision of a responsible manager or another person over the age of 18 assigned to the task by the licence holder. (Section 38 of the Alcohol Act.) **The licence holder must organise the supervision of the serving in such a way that a person over 18 years of age responsible for the serving of alcoholic beverages can effectively monitor the serving and intervene in it if necessary. An employee under 16 years of age may accept orders of alcoholic beverages in a restaurant but may not sell, dispense or hand over alcoholic beverages to customers.**

A person selling alcoholic beverages or taking part in supervising the serving of alcoholic beverages cannot be under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances when on duty (Section 38 of the Alcohol Act).

As part of the self-monitoring, the licence holder must ensure that their staff are familiar with their obligations specified in the Alcohol Act and the self-monitoring plan. The licence holder must keep a record of the training and skills of the persons working in their premises and present the information to the supervisory authority on request. (Section 57 of the Alcohol Act.)

The licensing authority may impose conditions and restrictions on the number of staff if they are necessary to ensure supervision at the premises where alcohol is served and in the surrounding area, to prevent disturbances and noise nuisances in residential areas, or to ensure public order and safety (Section 22 of the Alcohol Act).

2.4 Representative of the licence holder and alcohol passport

A responsible manager appointed by the licence holder or another person appointed by the licence holder for this task must be present at the licensed premises as the licence holder's representative if the premises are open to customers. The representative of the licence holder must be at least 18 years old. (Section 38 of the Alcohol Act.) **A representative of the licence holder must be appointed for the entire duration of the opening hours. The staff working must know who this person is at any given time.**

As of 3 January 2027, a license holder's representative appointed by the license holder must be present at a site where alcohol is served if the place is allowed to sell alcoholic beverages over 2.8% and the place is open to customers (Section 38 of the Alcohol Act).

The self-monitoring plan of the licensed premises must describe the duties of the licence holder's appointed representative (Section 3 of the StmA).

The holder of the alcohol serving licence must ensure that the licence holder's representative has a

certificate demonstrating knowledge of the Alcohol Act, i.e. alcohol passport, as approved by the Finnish Supervisory Agency (Section 57 of the Alcohol Act).

The licence holder must keep a record of the alcohol passports or certificates of the persons acting as representatives of the licence holder (Section 57 of the Alcohol Act). This obligation can be fulfilled in alternative ways:

- **the licence holder keeps copies of the certificates presented to it (in the office, at the premises where alcohol is served, or in electronic form); or**
- **the licence holder keeps a list of persons who have presented a certificate to the operator and records in a list when the qualification was verified (annex to the self-monitoring plan or electronic record).**

According to the law, only the representatives of the licence holder must have an alcohol passport or a certificate of qualification, so only the qualifications of those working in these positions must be recorded. However, as part of its self-monitoring, the licence holder may also keep records of the certificates of other personnel.

The Finnish Supervisory Agency may request the licence holder to submit a copy of the alcohol passport or certificate for inspection if there are deficiencies in the self-monitoring plan or if there is reason to suspect the accuracy of the records.

The alcohol passport is issued by a university of applied sciences as referred to in the Universities of Applied Sciences Act (932/2014), which provides training in the restaurant industry, or by a training provider as referred to in the Act on Vocational Education and Training (531/2017), which provides training in the restaurant industry. An alcohol passport is granted to a person who has successfully passed the alcohol passport examination. (Section 58 of the Alcohol Act.)

A basic degree from an educational institute in the restaurant and catering industry organising alcohol passport exams, a vocational qualification in restaurant customer service, and a university of applied sciences degree in the tourism and catering industry are considered to correspond to passing the alcohol passport exam if the degree includes

knowledge of the topics covered in the exam (Section 7 of the StmA).

A certificate issued by an educational institution in the Åland province that provides training in the restaurant industry, demonstrating knowledge of the rules related to the serving of alcoholic beverages, is also accepted as an alcohol passport (Section 8 of the StmA).

Persons who met the competence criteria for a representative of a licence holder of a licensed premises under the previous Alcohol Act (1143/1994) also meet the competence requirements of the current Act (Section 93 of the Alcohol Act). Competence can be demonstrated with an alcohol passport or a degree certificate. **The alcohol passport may have been issued during the previous Alcohol Act.**

The Finnish Supervisory Agency does not maintain a register of issued alcohol passports. If the alcohol passport is lost, a copy can be requested from the educational institution that issued the passport. An alcohol passport is valid indefinitely, meaning it does not expire and does not need to be renewed.

2.5 Serving prohibitions and customers

Alcoholic beverages may not be sold or otherwise provided in the serving of alcohol:

- **to a person under the age of 18**
- **to a person who is visibly intoxicated or behaves in a disorderly manner**
- **if there is a justified reason to assume that the alcoholic beverage will be illegally delivered or supplied** (Section 37 of the Alcohol Act).

The possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages in licensed premises is not permitted for persons under the age of 18, those who are clearly intoxicated, or those who behave in a disorderly manner (Section 37 of the Alcohol Act).

A customer who is clearly intoxicated must not be allowed into licensed premises. A customer in licensed premises who is clearly intoxicated must be removed from the premises. (Section 36 of the Alcohol Act.)

The Act on Accommodation and Food Service Activities (308/2006) regulates the right to choose customers and the maintenance of order. However, the criteria for selecting customers must not be discriminatory. The

prohibition of discrimination is regulated by the Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014).

The Private Security Services Act (1085/2015) provides for the right of a security guard to deny a person entry to their area of operation and to remove the person from that area.

2.5.1 Proving one's age in licensed premises

A person who purchases alcoholic beverages and spends time on licensed premises is obligated, when requested, to prove their age to staff monitoring the serving of alcoholic beverages and the authorities monitoring compliance with the Alcohol Act. **Age must be proven with an official photo ID, such as a driver's licence, passport, or other reliable official document with a photo.** (Section 40 of the Alcohol Act.)

Other reliable documents with photos issued by an authority may include, for example, a refugee travel document or an alien's passport. The document may also be digital. A foreign photo ID, passport, or driving licence may be used as proof of age if it does not appear easy to forge and if it indicates the person's

age. However, a Kela card or student ID are not acceptable documents for proof of age.

The holder of an alcohol serving licence may themselves determine which other documents with photos, issued by the authorities, they accept as proof of age. The policies may nevertheless not be discriminatory. **The restriction of ID checks to a specific customer base must not be based on discriminatory practices, such as national origin.**

Before handing over an alcoholic beverage, the sales staff must always check the customer's age if there is any reason to suspect that the customer is under the age of 18 based on their appearance or other factors. The seller must also check that the photo on the ID card is of the customer. This should be done even though the security guards check the age of young people when they enter the restaurant.

If the document indicating the age is clearly fake, the salesperson may contact the police and notify them of the fake document.

The licence holder is responsible for ensuring that minors do not receive alcoholic beverages in the

licensed premises. The licence holder and the staff of the licensed premises are responsible for ensuring that a minor cannot consume, for example, an alcoholic beverage given to them by another customer (sections 37, 38, and 39 of the Alcohol Act).

The Alcohol Act does not prohibit the presence of minors on licensed premises. However, the licence holder may set an age limit for the licensed premises.

The Alcohol Act includes a provision for 18+ spectator premises. **The licensing authority may approve a sports, exercise, music, or other similar event viewing area as a licensed area if it is reserved exclusively for customers aged 18 and over. Minors are not allowed in the 18+ spectator area when alcohol is being served.** (Section 18 of the Alcohol Act.)

The self-monitoring plan of the licensed premises must describe the practices by which the licence holder ensures compliance with the age limits for serving alcoholic beverages in the licensed premises (Section 3 of the StmA).

2.5.2 Intoxicated or disorderly customers

A customer who is clearly intoxicated may not be allowed to enter licensed premises (Section 36 of the Alcohol Act).

Alcoholic beverages must not be sold or otherwise delivered to a person who is visibly intoxicated or who behaves in a disorderly manner (Section 37 of the Alcohol Act). **Disorderly behaviour can manifest itself as defiance, aggression, or violence.**

The possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages in licensed premises is not permitted for persons who are clearly intoxicated or who behave in a disorderly manner (Section 37 of the Alcohol Act). **A customer in licensed premises who is clearly intoxicated must be removed from the premises** (Section 36 of the Alcohol Act).

A person whose intoxication is clearly noticeable has a significantly impaired ability to make sound judgments. Because of this, they can be unpredictable and their behaviour cannot be anticipated. They can easily cause a disturbance, for example, by taking another customer's drink.

Intoxication is usually clearly visible if:

- **a person has difficulty fixing their eyes on something or has a glazed look in their eyes;**
- **a person behaves disorderly, loudly, and is overly confident;**
- **a person has difficulty understanding things and what another person is communicating;**
- **a person's movements are unsure and clumsy, they have difficulty grabbing objects, and their reflexes are slow;**
- **a person spills their drink and has difficulties bringing the glass to their mouth;**
- **a person staggers or totters and cannot walk straight, or falls without support;**
- **a person's speech is slurred and no longer understandable;**
- **a person is incoherent or has difficulty controlling their emotions;**
- **a person is slumped over or may easily fall asleep or has passed out/is sleeping;**
- **a person is feeling sick.**

The characteristics of clearly visible intoxication are always evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The evaluation must account for the possibility that the characteristics pointing towards intoxication may be caused by an illness or injury or disability. The application of the characteristics must not result in discrimination based on an illness or injury or disability.

A customer who is removed from licensed premises may not be able to take care of themselves due to a state of severe intoxication. In these situations, staff must ensure that the customer leaves safely, for example, by ordering a taxi for them. The customer may wait under supervision in the restaurant's entrance area for transport home. Ensuring customer safety may sometimes require contacting the police in removal situations.

The self-monitoring plan of a licensed premises must include a description of the procedures and supervision practices aiming to prevent the serving of alcoholic beverages to a person whose intoxication is clearly visible or who behaves disorderly. The self-monitoring plan must describe how the staff of the

licensed premises must act if the customer's state of intoxication is clearly noticeable when entering or staying in the licensed premises. (Section 3 of the StmA.)

2.6 Serving hours

The serving of alcoholic beverages with more than 2.8% is permitted from 9 a.m. to 1:30 a.m., unless the licence decision limits the serving time. Serving can continue until 3 a.m. on the eve of Independence Day, New Year's Eve, the eve of May Day, and Midsummer Eve. (Sections 22 and 43 of the Alcohol Act.)

Serving hours are not restricted in an accommodation room within the licensed area, provided that the quantity of alcoholic beverages available is limited according to the number of customers and the requirements for supervision of serving (Section 45 of the Alcohol Act). **Therefore, serving hours do not apply to minibar service in accommodation rooms that are part of the licensed area. If alcoholic beverages are served in a hotel room as room service, the serving hours must be observed.**

Consumption of alcoholic beverages that have been served is permitted for one hour after the end of

serving hours (Section 43 of the Alcohol Act). **The licensed premises does not need to be closed when the consumption period ends.** The licence holder can decide freely on opening hours.

The serving hours can be extended by a notification or licence procedure to start no earlier than 7 a.m. and end no later than 4 a.m. A licence to start serving alcohol at the earliest at 7 a.m. may only be granted for the breakfast service of a licence holder's accommodation. (Section 44 of the Alcohol Act.) The notification of extended serving hours and the permit of extended serving hours are discussed in more detail in section 5.4. of this guide.

If the serving of alcohol continues after 1:30 a.m. at the licensed premises on the basis of a notification or a licence, the licence holder is obliged to appoint security guards as referred to in the Private Security Services Act to monitor order and safety at the licensed premises and in its immediate vicinity. One security guard must be assigned for each hundred customers or part thereof. The security guards must perform their duties from 1:30 a.m. until the end of the customers' consumption of alcoholic beverages, unless otherwise

specified by the licensing authority. (Section 45 of the Alcohol Act.)

If serving is continued after 1:30 a.m., the licensed premises' self-monitoring plan must include a description of how the number of customers at the licensed premises is monitored, how the maintenance of order is carried out, and what are the tasks assigned to the security guards (Section 4 of the StmA).

From the perspective of alcohol legislation, there is no impediment to a security guard also performing other tasks at a licensed premises, provided that the simultaneous performance of these tasks does not compromise the maintenance of order or the performance of other tasks.

The change to summer time affects the serving hours of licensed premises with extended hours. **When summer time begins, serving must be stopped in accordance with the extended hours decision, but no later than 4 a.m. summer time, i.e. 3 a.m. winter time.** After this, consumption of alcoholic beverages is allowed for one hour, i.e. up to 5 a.m. summer time. However, the licensed premises do not need to be closed. **When switching to winter time, serving can continue according to the**

same principles until 4 a.m. in winter time, i.e. until 5 a.m. summer time.

2.7 Activities in the licensed area

A licensed area refers to an area where customers are allowed to consume served alcoholic beverages. A licensed premises, on the other hand, refers to the totality of the licensed area(s) and other premises, such as the kitchen, toilet facilities, and storage rooms.

The serving of alcoholic beverages may only be carried out by delivering them for the customer to consume in an area approved for serving by the licensing authority (Section 36 of the Alcohol Act). According to the preparatory work of the law, delivery means the physical transfer of control of an alcoholic beverage to the customer. **Alcoholic beverages may therefore not be served as self-service, where the customer independently takes and serves themselves an alcoholic beverage without a personal customer service interaction with the seller. An exception to this are the meeting and sauna facilities or similar areas of the licence holder's closed groups, as well as accommodation rooms. In them, a limited amount of**

alcoholic beverages may be available to customers in accordance with the requirements of the regulations related to the supervision of serving alcohol. (Section 45 of the Alcohol Act.)

In a licensed area, only alcoholic beverages sold by the holder of the alcohol licence for the purposes of consumption may be consumed. An alcoholic beverage sold as retail by the licence holder may not be consumed in the licensed premises. (Sections 3 and 36 of the Alcohol Act.) **An owner of the premises or another outlet and a staff member of the licensed premises as well as an organiser of the event have the right to remove the alcoholic beverage from a person who breaches the prohibition and to dispose of it in a verifiable way (Section 86 of the Alcohol Act).** A security guard's right to remove an alcoholic beverage from a person who breaches the prohibition is provided for in the Private Security Services Act.

The area where alcoholic beverages are served must be clearly limited or marked, unless the boundaries of the area are otherwise clearly visible. Served alcoholic beverages may not be taken outside the licensed area or consumed outside it. (Section 36 of the Alcohol Act.)

The limitation and marking of the licensed area significantly prevent the transfer of alcoholic beverages away from the licensed area if the boundaries of the licensed area cannot otherwise be clearly observed. **The licence holder and the person appointed by them may take possession of a container that has been transferred away from the licensed area from a person who violated the prohibition and dispose of the alcoholic beverage it contains** (Section 39 of the Alcohol Act).

In some cases, the licensed areas of a licensed premises may be separate from each other. An example of such a situation is when there is a sidewalk between a restaurant and its outdoor licensed area that is not part of the licensed area. In approving a licensed area, the licensing authority may allow customers to transport alcoholic beverages from one licensed area to another within the licensed premises as approved in the licence holder's self-monitoring plan (Section 36 of the Alcohol Act). **The licence holder must clarify in the self-monitoring plan how the licensed premises operates in terms of transporting drinks from one licensed area to another and the related customer guidance and supervision.**

If the serving licence holder or a person working at licensed premises gives away an alcoholic beverage for consumption off the premises without a retail sales licence for that beverage, they may be convicted of an alcohol offence (Chapter 50a of the Criminal Code).

Two or more licence holders may operate in the same licensed area at the same time if they have been granted a licence by the licensing authority. However, one licence holder must be responsible for the supervision of the common licensed area in accordance with the licence. (Section 19 of the Alcohol Act.)

The self-monitoring plan of the licensed premises must describe the operating methods of the licensed premises for supervising compliance with the aforementioned prohibitions and obligations (Section 3 of the StmA).

Under certain conditions, the licensing authority may impose conditions and restrictions on the serving licence or the approval of the licensed premises. The reason for setting conditions or restrictions may be the location of the place, the special nature of the activity or other special circumstances that have arisen in the activity. The conditions or restrictions may relate to the licensed area, the number of customer seats, or the prevention of noise

nuisances. Conditions and restrictions may be imposed if they are necessary to ensure supervision at the licensed premises and in the surrounding area, to prevent disturbances and noise nuisances in residential areas, or to ensure public order and safety. (Section 22 of the Alcohol Act.)

2.8 Paying for alcoholic beverages

The payment for the alcoholic beverage does not have to take place at the same time as the delivery of the beverage. However, compliance with serving prohibitions must always be verified before serving the drink to the customer, even if the alcoholic beverage has already been paid for in advance.

In licensed premises, various online pre-payment systems have become common for paying for alcoholic beverages. The marketing rules for alcoholic beverages must be taken into account when implementing websites or mobile applications.

The licensed premises' self-monitoring plan must include the maximum amount of credit specified by the licence holder and procedures for operating and supervising sales on credit if alcoholic beverages are

sold to consumers on credit using means other than commonly used payment cards or payment applications processed by credit institutions, or in connection with programme services or accommodation (Section 4 of the StmA).

2.9 Alcohol portions in licensed premises

Alcoholic beverages may only be sold for consumption on the licensed premises in opened packages or dispensed into a glass or other container (Section 41 of the Alcohol Act). **Unopened packages may also be used in serving that takes place in an accommodation room to a traveller as referred to in the Act on Accommodation and Food Services, and to closed groups in the licence holder's meeting room or a similar area. In this case, the amount of alcoholic beverages available must be limited in accordance with the number of customers and the requirements for supervising the serving.** (Section 45 of the Alcohol Act.)

If an alcoholic beverage is sold as measured servings, it must be available to the customer in the following basic portions:

- **A basic portion of an alcoholic beverage with more than 22% alcohol is 4 centilitres.**
- **A basic portion of an alcoholic beverage with more than 15% but not more than 22% alcohol is 8 centilitres.**
- **A basic portion of an alcoholic beverage with more than 8% but not more than 15% alcohol is 12 centilitres.**
- **A basic portion of an alcoholic beverage with no more than 8% alcohol is 33 centilitres.** (Section 41 of the Alcohol Act.)

The maximum amount of alcohol served at one time is not limited by alcohol legislation. However, the self-monitoring plan of the licensed premises must specify the maximum portions of serving that can be sold to a single customer at a time, as determined by the licence holder, if the permitted portion is larger than the four basic portions mentioned above (Section 4 of the StmA).

The licensing authority may impose conditions and restrictions on the quantity of serving portions if they are necessary (Section 22 of the Alcohol Act).

Instructions on measuring devices used for alcoholic beverages are available on the website of the Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency (Tukes).

2.10 Prohibition of actions contrary to good practice

The serving of alcoholic beverages must not be contrary to good practice. An action is considered contrary to good practice if it is clearly at odds with generally accepted social values. An action contrary to good practice is, in particular, one that is approving of or indifferent to endangering health when under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, medicinal products, or chemicals. (Section 4 of the Alcohol Act.)

According to the government proposal on the Alcohol Act, for example, organising drinking competitions could be considered a risk to the health of customers if large amounts of alcoholic beverages are consumed very quickly during the competitions. For example, in the context of serving alcoholic beverages, it may also be contrary to good practice to sell or allow alcohol to be used in unusual ways, such as by absorption through mucous membranes or inhalation.

According to the government proposal, it is not necessarily contrary to good practice to charge a package price for a meal and the alcoholic beverages included in it but depending on the marketing and the nature of the serving, serving alcoholic beverages on the basis of "drink as much as you want" for a certain price may be prohibited as contrary to good practice. Similarly, in some situations, the serving of alcoholic beverages on credit to vulnerable consumer groups could be considered contrary to good practice based on an overall assessment.

2.11 Retail sale of alcoholic beverages in connection with serving

Retail sale of alcoholic beverages means the sale of an alcoholic beverage for consumption outside the premises controlled by the seller or under the supervision of the seller, so that the alcoholic beverage is handed over from domestic retail sales or from Alko directly to the customer, the holder of the delivery licence or to a buyer or other recipient acting on behalf of the holder of the delivery licence (Section 3 of the Alcohol Act).

Before the amendment to the Alcohol Act that enters into force on 3 January 2027, the retail sale of alcoholic beverages may only be carried out by handing them over to the customer in the indoor spaces of an approved retail outlet (Sections 17 and 35 of the Alcohol Act).

Fermented alcoholic beverages with a maximum alcohol content of 8% and other alcoholic beverages with a maximum alcohol content of 5.5% that are being served on licensed premises may be sold to customers for takeaway purposes in accordance with the normal rules governing the retail sale of alcoholic beverages, if a retail sales licence for the sale of alcoholic beverages has been issued to the licensed premises (Section 17 of the Alcohol Act). The same rules that apply to the retail sale of alcoholic beverages in general must be followed in the retail sale of alcoholic beverages in licensed premises.

Alcoholic beverages may only be sold for retail purposes in packages that are already filled and sealed (Section 41 of the Alcohol Act). The kegging or bottling of alcoholic beverages requires a production licence for alcoholic beverages, and the kegging or bottling may not be carried out anywhere other than an approved

production premises (Sections 3 and 14 of the Alcohol Act).

Without a manufacturing licence, mixing and packaging alcoholic beverages for retail sale in licensed premises is only possible if the raw materials used are alcoholic beverages with a maximum alcohol content of 2.8 %. If the final product contains more than 1.2% of alcohol, it can only be sold in pre-filled sealed packages such as sealed bottles, cans, or similar. The packaging must be suitable for food use and sealed so that the product does not escape from the packaging even if the packaging is turned upside down. Beverages may only be mixed and packaged in a food premises notified to the municipal food authority. The food producer or processor is responsible for the safety, content, composition, and packaging labels of the product in accordance with the Food Act (297/2021).

Alcoholic beverages with an alcohol content of more than 2.8% may only be sold for retail purpose between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Alcoholic beverages sold in retail must be delivered to the customer within the sales hours. (Section 42 of the Alcohol Act.)

The self-monitoring plan of the licensed premises may specify the operating method of the licensed premises for storing alcoholic beverages sold to customers for a retail purpose, for example, in connection with cloakrooms, if the customer remains on the licensed premises after purchasing alcohol beverages to take away.

The self-monitoring plan for an alcohol serving site with a retail sales licence must also include a report on the organisation of retail sales of alcoholic beverages and the implementation of cash register and sales arrangements at the retail point of sale and at any pick-up point for the delivery of alcoholic beverages (Section 3 of the Decree of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health). The self-monitoring plan is described in more detail in Chapter 4.1.

The licensing authority may impose licence conditions pertaining to the checkout and sales arrangements of retail if the location or activities of the premises involve special monitoring or general order and safety risks or if serving is also being carried out in the same location (Section 17 of the Alcohol Act). In addition, the licensing authority may restrict the retail hours of licensed

premises, and the quantities sold to customers if necessary (Section 22 of the Alcohol Act).

The retail sale of alcoholic beverages in licensed premises is also subject to other provisions on the retail sale of alcoholic beverages, which are described in more detail in the Finnish Supervisory Agency's guide on the retail sale of alcoholic beverages.

From the retail sales point or the pick-up point for the delivery of alcoholic beverages approved in the retail sales licence, a maximum of 8.0% fermented alcoholic beverages and a maximum of 5.5% alcoholic beverages produced by other means and solid alcoholic preparations may be delivered to the customer from 3 January 2027 with an alcohol delivery licence (sections 17, 35, 35 a and 55). The retail sales licence holder must ensure that the delivery is marked as containing alcoholic beverages (section 35 of the Alcohol Act).

An alcohol delivery licence and a pick-up point for the delivery of alcoholic beverages can be applied for from 3 November 2026.

A retail sales licence holder may accept orders and payments for alcoholic beverages even before 3 January

2027 when the intended delivery is on or after 3 January 2027. Alcoholic beverages may be handed over to the holder of the alcohol delivery licence or to a person acting on their behalf for delivery purposes no earlier than 3 January 2027 at 00:00. An alcohol supplier may hand over the alcoholic beverages to the customer no earlier than 9:00 a.m.

The delivery of alcoholic beverages is addressed in the instructions of the Finnish Supervisory Agency on delivery of alcoholic beverages.

2.12 Kitchen alcohol and alcoholic preparations

A restaurant can apply for a licence to use kitchen alcohol in food preparation. Kitchen alcohol purchased with a licence is intended exclusively for food preparation and is exempt of alcohol tax. The use of tax-exempt kitchen alcohol for the preparation of beverages or mixed drinks is prohibited. (Section 15 of the Alcohol Act.)

Alcoholic beverages purchased for serving can also be transferred to the kitchen and used in food preparation, provided that this is documented. As with kitchen alcohol, the use of alcoholic beverages purchased for serving must

be recorded, and the licence holder's accounting records must be able to determine the quantity and quality of the alcohol used.

Solid alcoholic preparations containing no more than 2.8 per cent ethyl alcohol by weight, such as chocolate sweets or ice cream, may be sold without a licence under the Alcohol Act. The provisions of the Alcohol Act on alcoholic beverages, such as age limits, apply to the retail sale, serving, and marketing of products with a higher alcohol content. The retail sale and serving of alcoholic preparations with an alcohol content of more than 2.8 per cent by weight require a licence. (Section 55 of the Alcohol Act.)

The retail sales licence of alcoholic beverages allows for the sales of alcoholic preparations containing a maximum of 8 per cent of alcohol by weight when produced by fermentation and a maximum of 5.5 per cent of alcohol by weight when produced by another method. Alcoholic preparations with a higher alcohol content than this can only be sold at Alko and for consumption in the licensed area of a premises with a serving licence. When applying the Alcohol Act, the preparation's alcohol content in percentage by weight will be regarded as its alcohol

content in percentage by volume. (Section 55 of the Alcohol Act.)

2.13 Procurement of alcoholic beverages

Only alcoholic beverages legally delivered to the licensed premises may be sold and consumed there. Alcoholic beverages with an alcohol content of more than 2.8% must always be purchased for serving purposes in accordance with the serving licence, and they cannot be transferred between licensed premises except in connection with the termination of operations. Alcoholic beverages are purchased legally from a licensed producer, wholesaler, or retailer of alcoholic beverages. (Sections 30 and 46 of the Alcohol Act.) The licence holder may also import alcoholic beverages for serving if they have notified the Finnish Supervisory Agency of their import activities (Sections 29 and 32 of the Alcohol Act).

If alcohol other than legally delivered alcohol is sold at or in connection with the licensed premises, the licence holder or a person working in the licensed premises may be convicted of an alcohol offence (Chapter 50a of the Criminal Code).

The serving and consumption of a customer's own alcoholic beverages in licensed premises is always prohibited. In private events held at restaurants, such as weddings, it is not permitted, for example, to consume champagne brought by a customer as a wedding toast. Only alcoholic beverages legally purchased for serving can be consumed.

2.14 Alcohol records and alcohol storage

The licence holder must record sales by account in such a way that the information required for the six-month report can be obtained. In addition, it is a good idea to include information on the loss of alcoholic beverages and other uses in the records.

In the inspection by the authorities, the licence holder must be able to demonstrate that the alcoholic beverages in the licensed premises and its alcohol storage have been acquired legally.

The self-monitoring plan must describe the storage of alcoholic beverages and the storage facilities (Section 3 of the StmA). The storage facilities must be suitable for their intended use. For example, food legislation includes

obligations and requirements concerning storage facilities, and they must be subject to food control.

Customers' own alcoholic beverages left for storage must be kept clearly separate from the beverages served and the alcohol storage, for example in a cloakroom or other similar space.

2.15 Semi-annual report on serving

Licence holders must regularly provide the supervisory authorities with the reports and details on their sales and other activities necessary for the supervision and risk assessment of the activities (Section 62 of the Alcohol Act).

The holder of the alcohol serving licence must report the values of the sales of alcoholic beverages (in euros) and the number of staff twice a year (Section 9 of the Decree of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health).

If the licensed premises have a retail sales license, the licence holder must also report the quantity (litres) and value (euros) of their retail sales of alcoholic beverages. In addition, the license holder must report the quantity (litres) and value (euros) of alcoholic beverages delivered,

as well as the delivery license holders used. (Section 9 of the StmA.)

In the semi-annual report, the holder of the serving licence must also report the quantity (in litres) and value (in euros) of alcoholic beverages purchased from a retail sales licence holder for serving. (Section 9 of the StmA.)

If there have been no sales during a reporting period, the licence holder must report this by the prescribed date.

The licence holder must submit the information in the semi-annual report at the end of the reporting period. The information for the first six months of a calendar year must be submitted by 31 July at the latest, and the information for the second six months must be submitted by 31 January at the latest.

The delivery of alcoholic beverages to the customer is possible on the basis of an alcohol delivery licence from 3 January 2027. Information on delivered alcoholic beverages and used delivery licence holders must be reported for the first time no later than 31 July 2027, if the licence holder has handed over alcoholic beverages for delivery during the first half of 2027.

The semi-annual report must be submitted in electronic format in the e-services of the alcohol trade register Allu at lvv.fi/allu. A semi-annual report filled in via the electronic system includes instructions for the contents of the required datasets. The semi-annual report may also be submitted by using an API solution. Instructions for how to use the API are available at lvv.fi/allu.

Obtaining statutory information is important for the entire industry, as it enables monitoring of the industry's development and prevents the grey economy and economic crime. Failure to submit the semi-annual report of serving despite official reminders may result in the imposition of a penalty or, in repeated cases, the revocation of the licence for a specified period or permanently (Section 71 and 72 of the Alcohol Act).

If alcoholic beverages are handed over for delivery as of 3 January 2027, the licence holder must be able to verify afterwards the name and licence number of the alcohol delivery licence holder delivering the alcoholic beverages (Section 35 of the Alcohol Act). Such data must be retained and provided to the licensing authority upon separate request for the purpose of supervision.

3 Marketing of alcoholic beverages

This chapter covers the most common marketing rules related to serving alcohol. More detailed information on the marketing of alcoholic beverages can be found in the Finnish Supervisory Agency's Guidelines for alcohol marketing.

3.1 Marketing provisions concerning publication venues

According to the Alcohol Act, the marketing of alcoholic beverages and their association with the marketing of other products or services is generally permitted. Although marketing is generally permitted, it must comply with the restrictions of the Alcohol Act. The marketing of strong alcoholic beverages with an alcohol content of more than 22% is prohibited, for example, in printed newspapers and magazines. The marketing of mild alcoholic beverages containing up to 22% per volume of alcohol is also prohibited in the situations or places specifically mentioned in Section 50 of the Alcohol Act. The following subchapters address the publication venues subject to the marketing regulations for mild alcoholic

beverages and strong alcoholic beverages, which are most commonly applied in serving.

3.1.1 Marketing of alcoholic beverages in licensed premises

Advertising of alcoholic beverages in public places is generally prohibited (Section 50.1, paragraph 2 of the Alcohol Act).

An exception to this is that alcoholic beverages can be marketed in licensed premises (Section 50.2, paragraph 3 of the Alcohol Act, and 50.3, paragraph 4 of the Alcohol Act). In licensed premises, advertising does not have to be limited to the licensed area, but alcohol advertisements may also be displayed in other indoor areas of the licensed premises, such as the toilet facilities, from where they are not clearly visible outside the licensed premises.

Strong alcoholic beverages are also partly governed in licensed premises by stricter rules than those governing mild alcoholic beverages. The product packaging or marketing of strong alcoholic beverages must not be clearly visible from outside the premises. Prohibited advertising includes, for example, displaying bottles of strong alcoholic beverages in the window of a premises.

Advertising of drinks or cocktails made from strong alcoholic beverages constitutes promotion of the sale of strong alcoholic beverages, which is also prohibited outside the licensed premises, with the exception of marketing that happens in a public information network.

Under the exception rule, marketing is allowed in outdoor licensed areas of licensed premises, even though these are public places. Alcohol advertisements can be displayed on the terrace, for example, on parasols, posters, or other furnishings. Advertising in outdoor licensed areas, for example, on promotional parasols and furniture, must not be so attention-grabbing and directed outside the licensed area that it could be considered a circumvention of the prohibition on advertising in public places. For this reason, large banners advertising alcoholic beverages and parasols or other similar items with large alcoholic beverage logos are prohibited.

Allowing the advertising of mild alcoholic beverages outside sales outlets is an exception to the general rule prohibiting advertising in public places, in terms of notifying availability and prices (Section 50.2, paragraph 4 of the Alcohol Act). Information on the availability and prices of mild alcoholic beverages sold in a licensed

premises can be displayed suitably in the display window of the licensed premises or outside the premises in its immediate vicinity.

Outside licensed premises, attention may not be drawn to alcoholic beverages by means of, for example, a particularly large advertisement or in a manner that otherwise attracts attention. Nor may the display of the product be clearly promotional; in other words, any extensive description of the product's quality, taste or other characteristics is prohibited.

The sale of pre-mixed, bottled mild alcoholic beverages is not the serving of strong alcoholic beverages, even if they contain strong alcoholic beverages. However, such beverages may only be advertised with regard to availability and price if their name does not include the product name of a strong alcoholic beverage.

The notice concerning mild alcoholic beverages must be placed in the immediate vicinity of the licensed premises and be under the control and supervision of the licence holder. Only for a justified reason, such as one related to the location or the difficulty of finding the premises, may an advertisement be placed elsewhere than within sight of the licensed premises. The customer must understand

the functional connection between the alcohol advertisement and its sales outlet. The general neon sign of a shopping centre located outside the centre, for example, is not considered a licence holder's advertising.

Advertising of mild alcoholic beverages is permitted with regard to availability and price, for example:

- in the window of licensed premises, in letters or symbols;
- on an advertising display stand in the immediate vicinity of licensed premises;
- in marquees at licensed premises;
- on promotional parasol of an outdoor licensed area.

3.1.2 Advertising on websites and social media

A licensed premises may advertise alcoholic beverages on the Internet, for example, on their own website or social media accounts, but the restrictions on the content of marketing set out in Section 50.4 of the Alcohol Act must be observed in the activity.

The following chapter discusses prohibited marketing content in alcohol advertisements in more detail (see chapter 3.2 Restrictions on marketing content).

3.1.3 Advertising on television, radio, and in cinemas

The marketing of strong alcoholic beverages is prohibited in television and radio broadcasting at all times of the day. Advertising of alcoholic beverages is only allowed on television and radio for mild alcoholic beverages. However, advertising of mild alcoholic beverages is prohibited between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. The marketing prohibition also applies to daytime repeats of programmes that were originally permitted to be broadcast at a later time (e.g. after 10 p.m.). Therefore, repeats of programmes during the day cannot include marketing of alcoholic beverages. (Section 50.1, paragraph 1 and Section 50.3, paragraph 1 of the Alcohol Act.)

The marketing of mild alcoholic beverages is prohibited in cinemas during public screenings if the age limit under the Act on Audiovisual Programmes (710/2011) is under 18 years. There is no age limit for strong alcoholic beverages in the law, so the marketing of strong alcoholic beverages is prohibited in all films regardless of the age limit.

3.2 Restrictions on marketing content

Section 50.4 of the Alcohol Act regulates restrictions on the content of alcohol beverage marketing. Section 50.4 of the Alcohol Act applies to the marketing of both mild (up to 22%) and strong (over 22%) alcoholic beverages.The prohibited marketing content for alcoholic beverages that is most frequently applied in licensed premises is reviewed in the subchapters.

3.2.1 Marketing aimed at minors

The marketing of alcoholic beverages is prohibited if it is aimed at minors or other persons to whom alcoholic beverages should not be sold (Section 50.4, paragraph 1 of the Alcohol Act). It is also prohibited to depict minors, persons with disorderly behaviour, visibly intoxicated individuals, or those with alcohol abuse issues in advertisements.

3.2.2 Inappropriate sales promotion

The marketing of alcoholic beverages is prohibited if it is considered contrary to good practice, inappropriate, or misleading for the consumer (Section 4 of the Alcohol Act and Section 50.4, paragraph 2 of the Alcohol Act).

Alcohol advertising that entices customers with free alcoholic beverages or offers discounts on alcoholic beverages based on the quantity consumed has been considered as contrary to good practice in authorities' supervisory practices. Misleading advertising occurs when consumers are given a false impression about, for example, the characteristics, size, or price of a product.

Examples of sales promotion that are contrary to good practice and prohibited:

- "First drink free", "We are raffling out free drinks";
- Restaurant "packages" that include the right to consume alcoholic beverages without restriction: for example, "free alcoholic beverages with a VIP ticket", "Two drinks for the price of one";
- Loyalty cards, beer passes, and other similar vouchers used to collect stamps: for example, "Every tenth beer free", "Every fifth drink at half price";
- Coupon distributed to consumers; "Free beer or cider with this coupon".

3.2.3 Highlighting alcohol content as a positive feature

The Alcohol Act prohibits the highlighting of the alcohol content of a beverage as a positive feature (Section 50.4, paragraph 4 of the Alcohol Act). This type of advertising occurs, for example, when an advertisement encourages choosing and purchasing a drink primarily because it has a high alcohol content.

The alcohol content can also be highlighted in advertising by presenting the percentage of alcohol in the drink in a way that attracts attention. The same effect is achieved through advertising that emphasises that the alcohol content of an alcoholic beverage is higher than before or high compared with its price or another drink.

According to the supervisory authority, the association of the alcohol content can be reversed by clearly stating in the advertisement that the term ‘strong’ refers to another characteristic of the drink, such as its original gravity or flavour. Expressions such as ‘strong’ or ‘powerful’ used in advertising to indicate strength are assessed in a similar manner.

3.2.4 Games, raffles and competitions related to alcoholic beverages

Games, raffles, and competitions may only be organised in a licensed premises if they are not directly or indirectly related to specific identifiable alcoholic beverages and that alcoholic beverages are not used as prizes.

Sales promotion of alcoholic beverages which involves consumers entering a game, raffle, or contest is prohibited (Section 50.4, paragraph 8 of the Alcohol Act). The licence holder may not organise a game, raffle, or competition where the prize is an alcoholic beverage. Games, raffles, and competitions related to certain alcoholic beverages are also prohibited, even if the prize is not an alcoholic beverage. The implementation method does not matter, as the prohibition applies to games, raffles, and competitions related to alcoholic beverages or brands that can be recognised in some way, whether they are organised online or in a place where alcohol is served.

In principle, corporate image advertising is also permitted for alcohol industry operators. If an alcohol industry operator organises a game, competition, or raffle that is not related to any specific or identifiable alcoholic beverage or brand, and does not offer an alcoholic

beverage as a prize, this is not prohibited alcohol marketing as referred to in Section 50.4, paragraph 8 of the Alcohol Act. However, the condition for participation in a competition or raffle may not be, for example, subscribing to a newsletter containing alcohol marketing or otherwise agreeing to receive alcohol advertising.

The prohibition on indirect advertising prevents the use of non-alcoholic products that belong to a product family that also includes alcoholic beverages.

3.2.5 Exploiting content produced by consumers and offering it to consumers for sharing purposes in information network services

Advertising of alcoholic beverages is prohibited if it uses verbal or visual content produced by consumers or makes content produced by the advertiser or consumers available to consumers (Section 50.4, paragraph 9 of the Alcohol Act). In particular, it is prohibited to use consumers' own drinking photos or videos in advertising and to share them through the licensed premises' website or social media, as well as to produce advertising videos for consumers to share.

The supervisory authority has provided the following guidance on the provision: The advertiser may not urge or encourage consumers to share content that is considered advertising and which they have produced or which consumers have produced. Many services also have a so-called “like” function. It is not prohibited for a consumer to express that they like the content produced by an advertiser without actually producing content themselves. The advertiser does not need to remove or block “likes”.

The following is permitted:

- Advertising of alcoholic beverages on websites.
- Advertising of alcoholic beverages on social media services if restrictions on the use of sharing functions have been taken into account and the possibility for consumers to write on the page has been blocked or the advertiser removes consumer comments considered to be alcohol advertising.
- Utilising consumer-generated content and sharing opportunities in the advertising of products other than alcoholic beverages. If the main message of the content is not related to alcoholic beverages, it does not need to be removed.

The following are prohibited:

- Encouraging the sharing of alcohol advertisements in connection with the material.
- Links to social media services and the utilisation of a sharing function in connection with alcohol advertising on websites controlled by the advertiser (so-called social media buttons).

3.3 Pricing and price advertising of alcoholic beverages

3.3.1 Special prices

In serving, it is allowed to publish short-term special price notices for mild alcoholic beverages outside the premises. The advertising of special prices for strong alcoholic beverages is only permitted online. Special prices for strong alcoholic beverages may not be published, for example, in the window of licensed premises, on the street in an advertising display stand or in a printed newspaper.

It is permitted to market drinks that are entirely made from alcoholic beverages with a maximum alcohol content of 22 percent outside the licensed premises. For

the sake of clarity, it should be mentioned that this is a mild drink, if it is not already apparent from the name of the drink.

The Alcohol Act does not set an upper or lower limit for the prices of alcoholic beverages.

3.3.2 Joint discount prices

Two or more packages or portions of alcoholic beverages may not be offered at a joint discount price so that the unit price of the same goods is higher when purchased separately (Section 51.1 of the Alcohol Act).

According to the grounds for the legislation, the prohibition on selling at a joint discount price also applies to “two for the price of one” offers, where an alcoholic beverage is offered at a lower price when ordered simultaneously for two people than when ordered individually. However, the pricing provision does not prevent licensed premises from selling alcoholic at a lower price than the licensed premises’ list price for a private event, provided that the lower pricing does not require the purchase of a certain amount of alcohol.

Also, the provision does not apply to a situation in which the same alcoholic beverage is sold in different packages,

for example 0.33-litre and one-litre bottles. The price per litre of an alcoholic beverage in a bigger package may be cheaper than its price per litre in a smaller package. This concerns the pricing of such as beer, red wine, and white wine, when served by the glass or bottle.

When advertising drink portions, the portion size and the amount of alcoholic beverage contained in the drink mixture must be stated in the advertisement. The advertisement must state how many centilitres, for example, a “large pint” of beer or a “glass” of red wine contains. It is always recommended to mention the price of the portion. In licensed premises, price information for all beverages sold on the premises must be available upon request.

Licensed premises may price an alcoholic beverage lower than usual when the offer is for a limited group of customers, such as persons registered as loyal customers. Special loyal customer prices or staff discounts are therefore permitted.

3.3.3 Prohibition of rebates on the price of alcoholic beverages

It is prohibited to offer and grant rebates on the price of alcoholic beverages, calculated on the basis of purchases of alcoholic beverages or other consumer goods or services, in retail sales, delivery, and serving (Section 51.2 of the Alcohol Act). Alcohol sales may not be promoted in the context of the licensed premises' loyalty cards or bonus programmes in such a way that the rebates would make the purchasing of alcohol cheaper the more alcoholic beverages or other consumer goods are bought.

The provision prohibits all types of rebate arrangements. Rebate is a general term that covers both bonuses and benefits offered in other forms, such as payment method bonuses. Therefore, offering and paying a bonus, payment method benefit, or other potential rebate on purchases in the form of a rebate for the price of an alcoholic beverage or a rebate earned from purchasing an alcoholic beverage is prohibited.

Loyal customer prices and discounts, as well as staff discounts, are available also for alcoholic beverages.

3.4 Combined offers and programme packages

It has been established in supervisory practice that an offer of a licensed premises, where a meal and a mild alcoholic beverage are sold at a combined price, is permitted under the following conditions:

- A non-alcoholic option is also available.
- The drink cannot be advertised as free or as a gratuity, the drink is not ‘free’ because the customer pays a combined price for it.
- The alcoholic beverage should not be the main message in the advertisement.

The following has been considered permissible in authority practice:

- To include one portion of an alcoholic beverage offered during the visit in the price of the entrance ticket. At the same context, it should be mentioned that there is also a non-alcoholic option available. The drink cannot be advertised as ‘free’, because the customer pays for it in the price of the entrance ticket.
- To include a portion of an alcoholic beverage as a welcome drink and a limited, reasonable amount of

alcoholic beverages as meal drinks in the price of a programme ticket sold by the licensed premises in connection with an event with programme organised at the licensed premises. A non-alcoholic option must also be available.

3.5 Loyal customer events

The licence holder may occasionally organise closed, time-limited events for loyal customers, during which a reasonable amount of alcoholic beverages may be served free of charge to loyal customers. The drinks served may include both mild alcoholic beverages and strong alcoholic beverages. Free alcoholic beverages must never be the main message in an invitation or event marketing.

Loyal customers must already have an existing customer relationship. An invitation to the loyal customer event must be delivered in advance and must be personal. A person who arrives at licensed premises and registers as a loyal customer only to receive a free beverage is not considered a loyal customer.

The time of closed loyal customer events must be limited in the invitation. During this time, the licensed premises or the relevant restaurant area must be closed to the

public. After the event, the licensed premises can continue its normal operations as a licensed premises open to the general public.

3.6 Product demonstrations

Alcoholic beverages can be presented in a licensed area at a trade fair event, for example. Alcoholic beverages may not be served free of charge or at a nominal price at events open to the public. Offering free alcoholic drinks is generally considered contrary to good practice and inappropriate conduct. The consumption of alcoholic beverages in connection with the presentation of alcoholic beverages must be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Alcohol Act.

Holders of licences for the production or wholesale for alcoholic beverages who are exhibitors must agree with the holder of the serving licence on the delivery of the alcoholic beverages for consumption and on other practical arrangements related to the presentation. Only alcoholic beverages legally delivered to the licensed premises may be served and consumed there.

4 Supervision and sanctions

The holder of a serving licence holds the primary responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Alcohol Act in serving activities. In practice, a licence holder's systematic self-monitoring means the preparation, maintenance and implementation of a written self-monitoring plan in cooperation with the licensed premises' staff.

Nevertheless, systematic self-monitoring does not negate the need for supervision carried out by the supervisory authorities. The key principle of the monitoring carried out by authorities is the steering and development of licence holders' activities to prevent violations of the Alcohol Act. Defectively planned self-monitoring and previous omissions in the self-monitoring plan also constitute grounds for targeted supervision by the authorities.

4.1 Systematic self-monitoring

A holder of an alcohol serving licence must have sufficient and accurate details of their activities and the related statutory obligations, as well as the risks associated with

their practical implementation (Section 56 of the Alcohol Act).

A party or person applying for a serving licence and a licence holder must draw up a written self-monitoring plan to ensure the legality of their activities, comply with it, and keep records of its implementation. The plan needs to be kept up to date. (Sections 18 and 56 of the Alcohol Act.)

The self-monitoring plan and the licence for the premises as referred to in the Alcohol Act must be kept available to the staff implementing the plan and the supervisory authorities (Section 1 of the StmA). **A licence holder must ensure that their staff know the content of the alcohol licences and that the staff know their obligations provided in the Alcohol Act and stated in the self-monitoring plan** (Section 57 of the Alcohol Act).

The self-monitoring plan must include a description of the licensed premises' business concept. If necessary, the plan must also include an analysis of the supervision priorities and risks related to the business concept and the location of the licensed premises. The plan must also include a description of the storage of and storerooms for

alcoholic beverages in the licensed premises. (Section 3 of the StmA.)

The self-monitoring plan must clarify the duties of the licence holder's representative as well as the number and duties of the personnel. The plan must also explain how the licensed premises will comply with the prohibitions and obligations of the Alcohol Act, for example, to prevent serving to intoxicated individuals or minors and for the maintenance of order. (Section 3 of the StmA.)

In addition, the self-monitoring plan must, if necessary, specify the practices for selling alcoholic beverages on credit, the maximum number of portions per occasion, and the maintenance of order during extended serving hours (Section 4 of the StmA).

The self-monitoring plan must also explain the risks of the emergence of the detrimental effects of the serving, how compliance with law will be monitored, how the management of critical risks will be realised, and how any deficiencies detected will be remedied (Sections 1 and 56 of the Alcohol Act).

The self-monitoring plan for an alcohol serving site with a retail sales licence must also include a report on the organisation of retail sales of alcoholic beverages and the implementation of cash register and sales arrangements at the retail point of sale and at any pick-up point for the delivery of alcoholic beverages (Section 3 of the Decree of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health).

The self-monitoring plan must include a description of the duties of the licence holder's representative appointed by the licence holder, as well as a plan for the number and duties of the personnel for the monitoring of compliance with the prohibitions and obligations laid down in the Alcohol Act at the retail point of sale and at any pick-up point for the delivery of alcoholic beverages. Among other things, the plan must describe the measures taken to ensure that alcoholic beverages are not handed over to minors or clearly intoxicated persons at the retail point of sale or delivery pick-up point. (Section 3 of the StmA.)

If alcoholic beverages are handed over for delivery under the retail sales license, the self-monitoring plan must describe how the license holder ensures that alcoholic beverages are handed over for delivery only to the holder of a delivery licence or to a person authorised to act on

their behalf. In addition, the plan must clarify how the licensee can retrospectively verify the name and licence number of the holder of the alcohol delivery licence. (Section 3 of the StmA.)

The self-monitoring plan must include a plan for actions to be taken in response to critical situations and observations made by authorities. The self-monitoring plan must also explain how its implementation is assessed annually and how it is kept up to date. If a self-monitoring plan is changed, it must be possible to determine the date of the change later. (Section 1 of the StmA.)

The self-monitoring plan must include a description of how the licence holder and the person in charge of the self-monitoring plan follow that the personnel comply with the self-monitoring plan and other instructions given to them. **The plan must also include an explanation of how the staff's competence in accordance with the Alcohol Act is ensured and how the records of employee training and competence are kept.** (Section 1 of the StmA.)

When necessary, the self-monitoring plan may be combined with a self-monitoring plan pursuant to the

Food Act and Tobacco Act (549/2016), and may also be drawn up electronically (Section 56 of the Alcohol Act).

The Finnish Supervisory Agency has drawn up a template form for self-monitoring plans. By carefully filling in and updating this form, licence holders can meet the requirements set for the self-monitoring plan.

The template for the self-monitoring plan for licensed serving can be found on the website of the Finnish Supervisory Agency and under the licensed serving applications in the e-services of the alcohol trade register Allu.

4.2 Supervision by the authorities

The Finnish Supervisory Agency supervises the retail sale, delivery, serving, marketing, and cross-border distance selling of alcoholic beverages throughout the country, as well as on vessels that are registered in Finland, as referred to in the Aviation Act (864/2014) and the Maritime Act (674/1994) (Section 60 of the Alcohol Act). In the Åland Province, the serving of alcoholic beverages is supervised by Åland's Environmental and Health Protection Authority, and the

sale, delivery, and marketing of alcoholic beverages are supervised by the State Department of Åland.

The Alcohol Act requires extensive executive assistance and stakeholder cooperation for the realisation and enforcement of the licensing administration, steering and supervision. To prevent the detrimental effects of alcohol and to combat the underground economy and white-collar crime, cooperation has been intensified with the tax, distraint, customs, police, labour protection, food control and health protection authorities.

Supervisory authorities can audit licence holders' facilities, activities, and documents, as well as the transport of alcohol-containing substances. Representatives of the supervisory authorities must be provided with unimpeded access to the premises and documents to be monitored, and they have the right to save the information required in monitoring activities and to obtain the samples required for monitoring free of charge. (Section 62 of the Alcohol Act.)

The authorities monitor licensed premises in a planned manner and often in cooperation with other authorities. **Supervisory visits are conducted both as scheduled and without advance warning.** Remote inspections

which aim to support licence holders in the planning and implementation of self-monitoring, among other things, are also conducted according to an agreed schedule.

During a supervision visit, the alcohol inspector aims to operate in a way that does not unnecessarily disturb customers or normal restaurant operations. **The inspector introduces themselves to the representative of the licence holder by showing their official ID card.** The inspection will proceed without problems if the licence holder's representative and personnel cooperate well with the inspector. For example, in order to avoid side effects, it is not appropriate to inform customers that an inspector is present.

The inspector discusses any matters observed at the licensed premises with the representative of the licence holder. The inspector points out any violations and shortcomings, as well as areas for development and instructions. **The inspector will always draw up an inspection report for the inspection visit and send it by email to the licence holder or their representative.**

The police may prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages for the duration of the current serving time at the most if the staff of the licensed premises are unable to

maintain order in the premises, if the building, safety or serving regulations concerning the number of customer seats have been significantly violated, or if it is necessary to ensure public order and safety in the area. The licensing authority must be notified about the prohibition. (Section 67 of the Alcohol Act.)

The police use an electronic inspection notification, which allows them to immediately report any violations and irregularities observed in licensed premises to the Finnish Supervisory Agency for possible further action in accordance with the Alcohol Act. **In addition, a waiter who has sold alcoholic beverages to a minor or a person who is visibly intoxicated may be imposed a criminal sanction, such as a fine.**

4.3 Penalties for violating provisions regarding serving

The starting point for the supervision carried out by the authorities is to guide and advise, but in cases involving clear violations, the licence holder's activities are intervened in by means of sanctions pursuant to the Alcohol Act. **Recurring minor deficiencies and violations also constitute grounds for issuing a warning or**

imposing a penalty. In the most serious cases, a licence may be revoked for a fixed period of time or permanently. If a licence holder is unable to achieve a satisfactory level of compliance with the Alcohol Act through self-monitoring despite the recommendations, conditions or restrictions may also be imposed on the licence.

The supervisory authority may prohibit a licence holder from continuing the business activity referred to in the Alcohol Act to the extent that the activity is materially contrary to good practice and has not been remedied or ceased within the set, reasonable period of time, despite the supervisory authority's request to this effect (Sections 4 and 68 of the Alcohol Act). The prohibition can be made more effective with a periodic penalty payment (Section 70 of the Alcohol Act).

The supervisory authority may order the licence holder or party subject to the reporting obligation to pay a penalty payment of at least EUR 300 and at most EUR 1,000 if the provisions regarding licensed serving or the conditions or restrictions set in a granted licence or approval have been violated, or if the set obligations have been neglected. A penalty payment may also be imposed if there have been

disturbances of the peace at the licensed premises or in its immediate vicinity due to deficiencies in the self-monitoring plan or failure to comply with it. (Section 71 of the Alcohol Act.)

In assessing the amount of the penalty, the nature, harmfulness, and recurrence of the action are taken into account. A penalty payment shall not be imposed if the action is considered minor or if imposing a penalty is unreasonable considering the nature of the action, its frequency, its planning, compliance with the self-monitoring plan, and other circumstances. The licence holder may be given a warning if there is reason to do so. (Section 71 of the Alcohol Act.)

The supervisory authority may revoke the licence for a specified period if, after a warning or the imposition of a penalty, the operator continues to breach or fail to fulfil its obligations and the breach is considered to be of a serious nature. A licence may also be revoked for a fixed period of time if the operator violates their essential obligations provided in the Alcohol Act in a manner that shows a blatant disregard for the obligations related to self-monitoring. When determining the length of the period, particular consideration is given to the seriousness of the

action on which the cancellation is based and the circumstances of the act. (Section 72 of the Alcohol Act.)

The supervisory authority may permanently revoke a licence issued under the Alcohol Act or an approval if, after the imposition of a penalty payment or the revocation of a temporary licence, the operator continues to intentionally violate or neglect their obligations and the conduct is also considered grossly negligent overall. A licence or approval may also be revoked permanently if the operator violates the Alcohol Act with an act or omission that causes a serious threat to human health and the action overall has been aggravated. (Section 72 of the Alcohol Act.)

A licence or approval may also be permanently revoked if the conditions for the licence or approval are not met and the situation is not corrected within the specified time limit (Section 72 of the Alcohol Act).

4.4 Sanctions for breaching marketing provisions

The sanctions for marketing violations are provided for in section 68–70 of the Alcohol Act. The sanctions may be imposed on both the party ordering and the party

executing the marketing and a person who works for them.

When detecting shortcomings or activity contrary to the marketing provisions of the Alcohol Act, the Finnish Supervisory Agency may provide informal guidance for remedying the activity.

If the guidance is insufficient for ending the unlawful activity, the Finnish Supervisory Agency may prohibit the party which has ordered the marketing activity or the party executing it, and a person working for them, from continuing or repeating the activity contrary to the provisions. The prohibition can be made more effective with a periodic penalty payment.

Marketing that violates the Alcohol Act can also result in criminal penalties. More detailed information on the supervision of the marketing of alcoholic beverages and related penalties can be found in the Finnish Supervisory Agency's Guidelines on alcohol marketing, in section 1.2 Supervision of the marketing of alcoholic beverages.

5 Application for a serving licence

A serving licence may be granted to a natural person or a legal person (Section 12 of the Alcohol Act). The serving licence is granted as a permanent or temporary licence (Section 9 of the Alcohol Act).

The serving licence is specific to the trader and the licensed premises (Sections 10 and 18 of the Alcohol Act). **A serving licence may also be granted to an applicant who does not have licensed premises if the serving is intended to be carried out in the licensed area of licensed premises approved in advance by notification** (Sections 19 and 20 of the Alcohol Act).

The serving licence for alcoholic beverages is issued by the Finnish Supervisory Agency upon application (Section 7 of the Alcohol Act). Serving licences for Åland are granted by Åland's Environmental and Health Protection Authority.

Serving on a watercraft or aircraft engaged in international traffic, or in an airport area used for international traffic that is accessible only to passengers presenting a boarding pass, is permitted by notifying the

Finnish Supervisory Agency (Sections 47 and 48 of the Alcohol Act).

The application for an alcohol serving licence should be submitted early enough before opening a restaurant or changing the business operator because serving alcohol without a licence or with a licence granted to a previous entrepreneur is illegal. An alcohol serving licence will only be granted once the applicant and the licensed areas have been found to meet the requirements for obtaining the licence and the applicant has prepared a self-monitoring plan.

The application for a licence must be made on a form approved by the Finnish Supervisory Agency. Serving licence applications and notifications should be submitted in electronic format in the e-services of the alcohol trade register Allu at lvv.fi/allu. Using electronic services requires a business ID. A person who acts on a company's behalf must have the right to sign for the company or an authorisation to act on the company's behalf issued by a person with a right to sign for the company. Such an authorisation can be issued in the suomi.fi service. The e-services are not available for

serving and retail sales licences regarding the Åland Islands.

The documents to be attached to the application are specified in the electronic forms. The forms have been prepared in such a way that the information and attachments to be filled in them cover the requirements for information attached to applications and notifications set out in the Government Decree on the Implementation of the Alcohol Act (151/2018).

The licensing authority may request an opinion from the police and the municipality, if necessary. If necessary, an opportunity for the immediate environment of the premises to express its views will be provided. Statements or explanations may also be requested from other parties deemed necessary. (Section 21 of the Alcohol Act.)

To assess the prerequisites of granting a licence, the licence application must include a statement concerning the applicant, the operations and its effects, and other relevant matters that are not already available to the licensing authority (Section 8 of the Alcohol Act).

A trader who has already been granted a serving licence for a particular location cannot start serving alcoholic

beverages in a new business location before they have also received a serving licence for the new location. If a trader holding a serving licence transfers the licensed premises to another person who continues the business there, the new trader may not serve alcoholic beverages at those premises until the licensing authority has granted them a serving licence upon application.

The penal provisions applicable to the unlawful sale and supply of alcohol are provided in Chapter 50(a) of the Criminal Code of Finland. A person who sells, supplies or otherwise delivers an alcoholic beverage to another party contrary to the Alcohol Act may be sentenced to a fine or imprisonment for an alcohol offence. The proceeds of the crime are forfeited to the State as provided in the Criminal Code of Finland.

5.1 Requirements for applicants

A trader must take care of their statutory obligations. These obligations mean both compliance with the provisions of the Alcohol Act and, for example, the timely payment of taxes and other public charges. A structural problem in the serving activities, in particular, has been that the business is sometimes conducted in such a way

that taxes and other obligations are not intended to be covered by the low pricing of alcoholic beverages. Such activities, as well as businesses with financial difficulties, can easily be associated with a lack of concern for compliance with the Alcohol Act.

A serving licence must be granted to a natural person or legal person referred to in Section 2, subsection 1 or Section 3, subsection 1 or 2 of the Enterprise Act (565/2023), who meets the requirements set out in the Alcohol Act (Section 12 of the Alcohol Act) concerning the applicant and the business operations.

The conditions for granting a licence to a natural person are that:

- The applicant is of legal age, their legal capacity has not been restricted pursuant to Section 18 of the Guardianship Service Act (442/1999), and a guardian has not been appointed for them pursuant to Section 8, subsection 1 of the aforementioned Act.
- The applicant is not bankrupt and is able to manage the business and fulfil its statutory obligations based on their assets.

- The applicant is known to be reliable and is suitable for the position in terms of personal qualities (Section 13 of the Alcohol Act).

The conditions for granting a licence to a legal person are that:

- The applicant is not bankrupt and is able to manage the business and fulfil its statutory obligations based on their assets.
- The members of its administrative bodies and the managing director, as well as the partners in an open company and the active partners in a limited partnership, meet the aforementioned requirements for natural persons (Section 13 of the Alcohol Act).

The conditions for granting a licence are not met in the manner referred to above if the applicant's or the person's previous conduct as a whole indicates that the applicant or the person is manifestly unfit to carry out the business activity in accordance with the Alcohol Act (Section 13 of the Alcohol Act).

The following is considered to be such a previous action:

- The applicant or person has significantly or repeatedly failed to pay taxes or other public payments, or the

person has exercised control over a legal person that has similarly failed to pay taxes or other public payments.

- The applicant or person is, according to a foreclosure or other investigation, otherwise than temporarily unable to meet their debts.
- The applicant or person has had a permanent licence under the Alcohol Act revoked in the last five years, or the person has exercised control over a legal person whose permanent licence under the Alcohol Act has been revoked during the same period.
- The person has been sentenced to a penalty for a crime related to the intentional operation of a business during the last five years, which may result in imprisonment.
- A person can be considered to be abusing intoxicating substances based on crimes or offences committed while intoxicated or arrests made under Chapter 2, Section 2 of the Police Act (872/2011) due to intoxication (Section 13 of the Alcohol Act).

The conditions for granting the licence may be assessed in accordance with the actual circumstances if it is otherwise clear from the application or the circumstances that the

applicant's business is managed or administered by someone other than the person mentioned above and the arrangements related to the procedure have been presented contrary to the conditions for granting the licence in order to circumvent the provisions on the conditions for granting the licence (Section 13 of the Alcohol Act).

In accordance with the requirement of a comprehensive assessment, the application for a licence cannot be rejected solely on the basis that the applicant has failed to pay taxes in their previous business activities, for example. An additional condition for making a negative decision is that the activity demonstrates that the applicant is manifestly unfit to carry out the licensed activity.

The conditions concerning the licence holder must also be valid after the licence has been granted. The absence of conditions may lead to the permanent revocation of the licence due to changed circumstances (Section 72 of the Alcohol Act).

A serving licence cannot be granted to a limited liability company, general partnership, limited partnership,

cooperative or association that is being set up, as they will only have legal capacity after their registration.

5.2 Temporary serving licence

A serving licence is primarily issued as valid until further notice. A serving licence is issued for a fixed period of time if the applicant has applied for a temporary licence or if the activities are of a temporary nature. For a legitimate reason, the licensing authority may also decide that the licence is issued for no more than one year for the purpose of monitoring the applicant or the conditions for the activity subject to a licence or the effects of the activities. (Section 9 of the Alcohol Act.)

The basis for granting and monitoring a temporary licence may be, for example, the licence holder's significant tax debt, which they are repaying according to a payment plan. The shortcomings in the financial conditions can be corrected by following the payment plan. The granting of a temporary licence may also be justified for the purpose of monitoring the reliability of the licence holder. The reason for this may be, for example, that the applicant has previously committed crimes that the licensing authority must take into account in the licensing decision, or that

they are reasonably suspected of having a substance abuse problem.

If the previous operation of the serving licence at the same location has caused disturbances or harm to the environment or public order and safety, the serving licence may be granted as a temporary measure to monitor the effects of the operation.

A temporary serving licence can be applied for events such as festivals. **At events, it may also be possible to carry out licensed serving with a notice, but this requires that the licensing authority has approved the licensed area at the request of the owner or holder of the area, and that the licensed operator has a valid serving licence.**

5.3 Requirements for licensed premises

Before starting to serve alcohol, a serving licence must be obtained for the premises or location where the licensed activity is to be carried out (sections 5 and 18 of the Alcohol Act). **The licence is company- and location-specific. If a restaurant moves to a new address or the business ID changes, a new serving licence must be applied for.**

The serving licence covers the licensed area of the licensed premises and is granted to an applicant engaged in food service activities as defined in the Act on Accommodation and Food Service Activities (308/2006), if:

- **The licensed area to be approved is of such size and structure that it can be supervised by the authorities and the licence holder.**
- **The applicant has drawn up a self-monitoring plan as referred to in Section 56 of the Alcohol Act** (Section 18 of the Alcohol Act).

A licensed area refers to an area where customers are allowed to consume alcoholic beverages. A licensed premises, on the other hand, refers to the totality of the licensed area(s) and other premises, such as the kitchen, toilet facilities, and storage rooms.

A serving licence may also be granted for serving a traveller in an accommodation room as defined in the Act on Accommodation and Food Services, and for serving closed groups in the licence holder's meeting room or in a similar area, such as a sauna. Due to their nature, these premises do not require active supervision. (Section 19 of the Alcohol Act.)

If a serving licence is applied for a mobile vehicle, the application must state a clear route along which serving will take place. If the vehicle is also intended to serve alcohol while stationary, these locations must be specified in the application and the licence decision. The conductor of a means of transport cannot act as the sole person supervising the serving. For these reasons, serving licences have not been granted to taxis, for example.

In addition to the licence holder, other business operators who serve food, for example, may operate on their own behalf in licensed premises. A serving licence can also be granted in connection with other businesses, such as a barber shop.

The rules related to the approval and use of premises for serving are found in particular in the legislation on construction, fire and rescue operations, health protection, food sales and hygiene, and accommodation and food service businesses. The articles of association of a property company may also contain provisions related to the intended use of the apartment. Requirements for the use of different premises, both under other legislation and under private law, are in force regardless of alcohol legislation. Although the alcohol licensing authority does

not investigate the aforementioned factors when granting a licence, other applicable legislation and private law agreements must also be complied with in the operations.

A serving licence may be granted to two or more applicants in the same licensed area simultaneously, if one applicant declares that they will be responsible for supervising the area (Section 19 of the Alcohol Act). **More than one vendor may serve alcohol in a common licensed area at the same time only if all vendors who intend to serve alcohol in the area have applied for a licence and the licensing authority has granted it. However, such a common licensed area cannot continue serving after 1:30 a.m.** (Section 44 of the Alcohol Act).

A licence for a shared licensed area can be applied for with a time limit, so that the licensed area is shared only until 1:30 a.m. at the latest, and then only used by one licence holder. In this case, the serving licence holder may continue to serve in the area after 1:30 a.m. in accordance with the provisions on extended serving hours. It is also possible to grant a serving licence to several operators in the same area at different times, if

licence conditions can ensure that supervision is carried out. (Sections 18 and 22 of the Alcohol Act.)

In approving a licensed area, the licensing authority may allow customers to transport alcoholic beverages from one licensed area to another within the licensed premises as approved in the licence holder's self-monitoring plan (Section 36 of the Alcohol Act). **An example of such a situation is when there is a sidewalk between a restaurant and its outdoor licensed area that is not part of the licensed area.** Approval for customers transporting alcoholic beverages may also be applied for in connection with an existing serving licence. **The licence holder must clarify in the self-monitoring plan how the licensed premises operates in terms of transporting drinks from one licensed area to another and the related customer guidance and supervision.**

A general spectator area of a sports, exercise, music, or other similar event may not be approved as a licensed area. However, a spectator area may be approved as a licensed area for the events referred to above, if it is reserved exclusively for customers aged 18 years or over. (Section 18 of the Alcohol Act.) **The licensing authority may approve a general spectator area or part**

of it as a licensed area and restrict the validity of the approval by a licence condition only to those times or events when the licensed area in question is reserved for adult customers (Section 22 of the Alcohol Act).

The licensing authority may impose conditions and restrictions related to the licensed area on the serving licence or the approval of the licensed premises in order to ensure supervision, if:

- The sale of alcohol would take place mainly in connection with or in the immediate vicinity of premises intended for or used by children or young people, or in a place where the business activity is considered to be mainly aimed at children and young people.
- The serving takes place at a sports event or an event that is a family event or otherwise involves a large number of children and young people (Section 22 of the Alcohol Act).

The licensing authority may also impose conditions and restrictions on the serving licence or the approval of the licensed premises due to the location of the premises, the special nature of the activity, or other special circumstances that have arisen in the activity. Conditions

and restrictions may be imposed if they are necessary to ensure supervision at the premises where alcohol is served and in the surrounding area, to prevent disturbances and noise nuisances in residential areas, or to ensure public order and safety. (Section 22 of the Alcohol Act.)

The conditions and restrictions referred to above shall be designed in such a way that they do not prevent or unreasonably hinder the licence holder from carrying out its restaurant activities. If conditions and restrictions are imposed on the licence holder's ongoing activity, they may be made effective no earlier than 30 days after the service of notice. The licensing authority shall, at the request of the licence holder, amend or remove the conditions and restrictions attached to the licence without delay if the nature of the activity or other special circumstances have changed to such an extent that they are no longer necessary. (Section 22 of the Alcohol Act.)

5.4 Extended serving hours

After 1:30 a.m., the serving may continue indoors until 4 a.m. at the latest, based on a written notification to the licensing authority (extended hours notification).

The notification must be submitted at least three weeks before the planned start of the extended serving hours. The notification must include information on the duration and timing of the extended serving hours, as well as information necessary for assessing the impacts of the serving. (Section 44 of the Alcohol Act.)

The licensing authority shall submit the extension notification to the municipal health protection authority for processing in accordance with the Health Protection Act (763/1994) (Section 44 of the Alcohol Act).

Serving can continue until 4 a.m. in outdoor areas if the licensing authority has granted licence for this (extended hours licence). A licence may not be granted for outdoor areas if the serving could cause harm to health in the residential environment. **An extended hours licence can also be obtained for starting the serving at the earliest at 7 a.m. in connection with the breakfast service at the licence holder's accommodation.** (Section 44 of the Alcohol Act.) For justified reasons, an extended hours licence can also be granted for a fixed term to monitor the effects (Section 9 of the Alcohol Act).

Notifications and applications regarding extended serving hours must be submitted in electronic format in the e-

services of the alcohol trade register Allu at lvv.fi/allu. Matters related to extended serving hours are submitted using the serving licence application form when applying for a serving licence or for already established activities by submitting a change application for the valid serving licence.

Serving may not continue after 1:30 a.m. in a shared licensed area of two or more licence holders (Section 44 of the Alcohol Act). **If the operators so agree, the licence for a shared licensed area may stipulate that after 1:30 a.m., the licensed area is only used by one licence holder.** In practice, other serving licence holders must stop serving by 00:30 a.m., after which the consumption of the drinks they have served must end by 1:30 a.m. In this case, extended hours can be notified or applied for.

The licensing authority may impose, among other things, conditions and restrictions on the number of staff and customer seats, serving hours, and the prevention of noise nuisances if they are necessary to ensure supervision at the licensed premises and in the surrounding area, to prevent disturbances and noise nuisances in residential areas, or to ensure public order and safety. The licensing authority may prohibit

the continuation of the serving if the health protection authority finds that it causes harm to the health of the residents in the immediate vicinity within the meaning of the Health Protection Act and the harm cannot be prevented by the measures taken by the licence holder. (Sections 22 and 44 of the Alcohol Act.)

The municipality has the right to prohibit or restrict the continuation of serving under certain conditions. The condition for a prohibition or restriction is that the continuation of the serving would cause a significant detriment to public order and safety. The prohibition or restriction may apply to the area of the municipality where the harm occurs. The municipal decision may apply to all days of the week or to specific days of the week and may be valid for an indefinite period or for a fixed term. A local authority's decision will enter into force at the earliest six months after it has become legally valid. (Section 44 of the Alcohol Act.)

If the serving continues after 1:30 a.m. at the licensed premises on the basis of a notification or a licence, the licence holder is obligated to appoint security guards as referred to in the Private Security Services Act to monitor order and safety at the licensed premises and

in its immediate vicinity. One security guard must be assigned for each hundred customers or part thereof, and they must perform their duties from 1:30 a.m. until the end of alcohol consumption by customers. (Section 45 of the Alcohol Act.)

The licensing authority may reduce the security guard requirement or remove it entirely if the licence holder presents in the extension notice or in a written application that the requirement is clearly unnecessary due to the nature of the business or other similar reason. The licensing authority may also, contrary to the above, require the appointment of more security guards if necessary. (Section 45 of the Alcohol Act.)

5.5 Serving alcohol at events and occasions

A temporary alcohol serving licence can be applied for events and occasions (Sections 9 and 18 of the Alcohol Act). **If the licensing authority has approved a venue for an event as a licensed premises at the request of its owner or holder, the holder of the serving licence may serve alcoholic beverages there after notifying the licensing authority** (Section 20 of the Alcohol Act). In

general, a temporary serving licence is the most appropriate way to organise a single event where alcohol is served.

5.5.1 Temporary serving licence for an event or occasion

The same procedures apply to the application for a temporary serving licence for events or occasions as to the application for a serving licence in general. These procedures are described in more detail in the previous sections of Chapter 5.

Applications for temporary serving licences are submitted in electronic format in the e-services of the alcohol trade register Allu at lvv.fi/allu. The form to be used is the serving licence application.

5.5.2 Serving alcohol in a pre-approved licensed premises

An event, meeting, and party venue and the corresponding area may be approved as a licensed area upon application by the owner or holder of the venue or area, under the same conditions and with the same restrictions as the licensed area of a serving licence.

Pre-approved licensed premises may consist of several licensed areas. A licensed area refers to an area where customers are allowed to consume served alcoholic beverages. Licensed premises, however, are collections of licensed areas.

Provisions on serving only apply to the licensed areas of pre-approved licensed premises when alcoholic beverages are being served there as notified to the licensing authority.

Applications for the approval of licensed premises for events and gatherings should be submitted electronically in the e-services of the alcohol trade register Allu at lvv.fi/allu. The form to be used is the approval application for licensed premises.

In the licensed area of a pre-approved licensed premises, an operator with a valid serving licence may carry out serving activities based on a notification. A serving licence may be granted to an applicant who does not have a licensed premises if the serving is intended to be carried out at events and occasions organised at pre-approved licensed premises. A serving licence granted to licensed premises can also be used to

serve alcohol in the licensed areas of pre-approved licensed premises. (Sections 19 and 20 of the Alcohol Act.)

Applications for serving licences without a licensed premises are submitted in electronic format in the e-services of the alcohol trade register Allu at lvv.fi/allu. The form to be used is the catering licence application.

Serving in a pre-approved licensed area requires a notification to be made to the licensing authority at least three days (72 hours) before the event begins (Section 20 of the Alcohol Act). However, it should be noted that if the activity requires, for example, a licence for a shared licensed area or extended hours, applications for these must be submitted well in advance, at least one month before the event.

An event or occasion where alcohol can be served with a notification cannot last longer than 30 days. Continuous activity or the consecutive organisation of various small events does not constitute a single event. The events must be specified in the notification. A single notification can be used to notify about serving at several events of similar scope and content in the same pre-approved licensed area, but for a maximum of 30 days (for example, sports match events or open-air dance events).

If the serving events are related to the travel services of pre-designated groups in the licensed areas of a pre-approved licensed premises, all routes available for and in use by travellers can be presented in a single notification for a maximum of one year at a time (Section 20 of the Alcohol Act). **The legislator has considered such travel services to be mainly various experiential, wilderness hiking and safari services that take place in nature and follow pre-planned routes.**

The same rules generally apply to the serving as to fixed licensed premises. **A self-monitoring plan must be in place for the serving.** The self-monitoring plan and the approval of the licensed premises must be kept available for the personnel implementing the plan and the supervisory authorities (Section 1 of the StmA).

Each approved licensed area of licensed premises may be declared to be operated by a different licence holder at the same time without applying for a licence covering a common licensed area. However, serving alcohol in the same licensed area at the same time requires an application for a licence for sharing licensed area. **A serving licence may be granted to two or more applicants in the same licensed area simultaneously, if**

one applicant declares that they will be responsible for supervising the area (Section 19 of the Alcohol Act).

If the operator wishes to extend the serving hours beyond 1:30 a.m. in the indoor premises of a pre-approved licensed premises, the operator with a serving licence intending to carry out activities in the area must notify the licensing authority at least three weeks before the event or occasion. The extension of serving hours outdoors after 1:30 a.m. requires an extended hours licence. The notification of serving in the licensed area of a pre-approved licensed premises, as well as event's other licence and notification matters, are handled electronically in the alcohol trade register's electronic service Allu at lvv.fi/allu. The form to be used is the notification of serving in approved licensed premises.

5.6 Retail sales licence at licensed premises

It is possible to be granted a retail sales licence to the inside of licensed premises with which customers may be sold fermented alcoholic beverages with a maximum alcohol content of 8% and other alcoholic beverages with a maximum alcohol content of 5.5% for

consumption off premises. The same rules that apply to the retail sale of alcoholic beverages in general must be followed in the retail sale in licensed premises. A retail sales licence for selling fruit wine or craft beer can also be obtained in connection with licensed premises, provided the conditions for granting the licence are met. (Section 17 of the Alcohol Act.)

A retail sales licence connected to a temporary serving licence or a pre-approved licensed area may only be issued for the demonstration event of several producers of alcoholic beverages which aims to demonstrate the products to consumers. (Sections 17 and 20 of the Alcohol Act.)

In the retail sales licence, pick-up points located at a site referred to in the Construction Act may be approved, from where alcoholic beverages may be handed over for delivery (Section 17 of the Alcohol Act). For example, a warehouse whose loading dock is used to hand over alcoholic beverages for delivery can be accepted as a pick-up point.

A pick-up point for the delivery of alcoholic beverages can be applied for from 3 November 2026. From 3 January 2027, alcoholic beverages can be delivered to the

customer from the retail sales location or from the alcohol delivery pick-up point approved in the retail sales license, with an alcohol delivery license.

The retail sales licence in connection with serving alcohol and pick-up point for the delivery of alcoholic beverages are applied for electronically in the electronic service of the Alcohol Trade Register at Allu at lvv.fi/allu. A retail sales license and an alcohol delivery pick-up point are applied for in connection with the application for an alcohol serving license using the form alcohol serving license application or by submitting an application for an amendment to a valid alcohol serving license for an already ongoing operation.

A retail sales application related to activities in the area of a pre-approved licensed premises is submitted via Allu using the form Notification of serving alcohol in an approved licensed premises when notifying licensed serving at an event or gathering.

The licensing authority may impose licence conditions pertaining to the checkout and sales arrangements of retail if the location or activities of the premises involve special monitoring or general order and safety risks or if

serving is also being carried out in the same location (Section 17 of the Alcohol Act).

The licensing authority may impose restrictions on the sales hours of retail sales at licensed premises and the quantities sold to customers if necessary to ensure supervision at the premises where alcohol is served and in the surrounding area, to prevent disturbances and noise nuisances in residential areas, or to ensure public order and safety (Section 22 of the Alcohol Act).

5.7 Licence to use kitchen alcohol

A restaurant can apply for a licence to use kitchen alcohol in food preparation. The licence to use kitchen alcohol is issued by the Finnish Supervisory Agency. Obtaining a licence requires that the need for kitchen alcohol is justified and that the place of use meets the requirements set for it.

Applications for a licence to use kitchen alcohol are submitted in electronic format in the e-services of the alcohol trade register Allu at lvv.fi/allu. The licence is applied for using the form application for a licence to use industrial and kitchen alcohol.

The application must include a statement of the intended use of the alcohol and the annual purchase requirement (types of alcohol and litres per type, recipes).

A record of the use and storage of kitchen alcohol must be kept, and it must be possible to determine the quantity and quality of the alcohol used from the licence holder's accounting.

It may not be worth applying for a licence to use kitchen alcohol for small-scale food preparation, as a fee is charged for processing the licence application and licence holders are also charged an annual supervision fee.

5.8 Notification of the commercial importation of alcoholic beverages for serving

The serving licence holder may import alcoholic beverages for serving after submitting a notification to the Finnish Supervisory Agency of their activities as an importer (Section 29 of the Alcohol Act).

The notifications can be submitted in electronic format in the e-services of the alcohol trade register Allu at lvv.fi/allu. The import notification for serving and retail sale of alcohol form is selected from the transaction

forms. The processing of the notification is subject to a charge, and a letter indicating that information has been entered in the register will be sent after a notification has been received. This letter must be presented to customs in connection with the importation.

The importer of an alcoholic beverage is responsible for the quality and composition of the alcoholic beverage delivered for consumption. The importer is also responsible for ensuring that the product, its labels, and other presentations comply with regulations and requirements. (Section 30 of the Alcohol Act.) The Finnish Supervisory Agency guides and monitors the implementation of this responsibility. In labelling, attention must be paid to the fact that any mandatory labelling concerning allergenic ingredients, for example, must be given on the packages in both Finnish and Swedish.

Importers must report all products they import to the alcohol trade register prior to their serving. In addition, all imported batches must be reported monthly to the Finnish Supervisory Agency. (Section 9 of the StmA.) Notifications and reports must be submitted in electronic

format in the e-services of the alcohol trade register Allu at lvv.fi/allu.

More information on importing alcoholic beverages can be found on the Finnish Supervisory Agency's website.

When imported, an alcoholic beverage must be reported as taxable. The import of an alcoholic beverage is considered illegal if alcohol tax has not been paid for it in Finland.

5.9 Changes in the serving

If a licence holder decides to materially change the nature or extent of their activities so that the licence issued to it no longer covers the altered activities, the licence holder must apply for a change to the licence prior to the change. This also applies to any changes related to the notification or approval. No changes may be carried out until the licensing authority has approved the change to the licence. (Section 11 of the Alcohol Act.)

To assess the prerequisites of the licence, the licence holder must attach to the change application a statement concerning the applicant, the operations and its effects, and other relevant matters that are not already available to the licensing authority. The licensing authority may

require additional information as necessary to assess the conditions for granting or approving the licence and the necessity of the provisions, conditions, and restrictions concerning the licence or approval. In this context, an explanation may also be required for any activity related to the change that remains unchanged. (Section 11 of the Alcohol Act.)

If the licence holder reduces its operations or ceases them other than temporarily, the licence holder must notify the licensing authority of this within one month of the reduction or cessation of operations (Section 11 of the Alcohol Act). The obligation has been established to ensure that the information in the alcohol trade register remains up to date. The obligation to notify of the cessation or reduction of activity only concerns permanent changes. For example, seasonal restaurants still have the option to keep their licences valid year-round if they wish, and they do not need to notify the licensing authority of any seasonal interruptions in operations. Similarly, the extended serving hours can be kept in effect even if they are not used continuously.

If the name of the licensed premises or other information changes, this must also be notified to the licensing

authority. The information is registered in the alcohol trade register, the accuracy of which is important, for example, for the delivery of goods and the receipt of notifications from the licensing authority. Changes to the licensed area may concern the indoor or outdoor premises of the licensed premises. The changes may be permanent or temporary. The licensed area may be changed based on the licence holder's notification. However, the licensed area in outdoor spaces cannot be expanded through the notification procedure. A notification of changes to the licensed area must be submitted to the licensing authority at least three weeks before the planned implementation of the changes. The licensing authority must notify within two weeks of receiving the notification if the change does not meet the conditions stipulated for the approval of the licensed area. (Section 18 of the Alcohol Act.)

The licensed area can be expanded outdoors and otherwise modified if desired by submitting an application to amend the serving licence. In this case, the change can be implemented when the licensing authority has approved it. (Section 11 of the Alcohol Act.)

Applications for changes in licences are submitted and notified in electronic format in the e-services of the alcohol trade register Allu at lvv.fi/allu. Changes are made by selecting the licence to be changed and clicking the "Make a change" button.

5.10 Change of the business operator and relocation to another business premises

The serving licence or other licence under the Alcohol Act and the rights included in it may not be sold or otherwise transferred, in whole or in part, to another party (Section 10 of the Alcohol Act).

If a trader with a serving licence transfers the operations of licensed premises to another operator who continues the business or if the old operator's business ID changes, licensed serving may not be started before a serving licence has been granted to the new operator.

If a licence holder wishes to transfer their business to another business premises, they must apply for a new serving licence.

5.11 Bankruptcy or death of a licence holder

If the holder of a serving licence or approval is declared bankrupt or the private trader acting as the holder of the licence or approval dies, the bankruptcy estate or the estate of the deceased may, if it so wishes, continue the operations. The activity may continue for a maximum of one year from the commencement of bankruptcy or the death of the licence holder. The bankruptcy estate or estate of the holder of a temporary licence or approval may continue operations until the end of the temporary period, but no longer than one year from the commencement of the bankruptcy or death. (Section 72a of the Alcohol Act.)

A bankruptcy estate or an estate of a deceased person must immediately notify the licensing authority after the bankruptcy or death if it wishes to continue operations (Section 72a of the Alcohol Act). The notification must generally be made within one month. In order to continue operations, the bankruptcy estate or the estate of a deceased person needs a new licence number from the licensing authority.

5.12 Termination of licensed operations

If the serving of alcoholic beverages is terminated other than temporarily, a notification must be made to the licensing authority within one month of the termination of the activity (Section 11 of the Alcohol Act).

The notification must be submitted in electronic format in the e-services of the alcohol trade register Allu at lvv.fi/allu. The notification is submitted by selecting the licence to be discontinued, selecting “Notification of termination” and by entering an end date for the licence.

The licensing authority may also, on its own initiative, mark a licence or approval as expired if the operator has ceased its activities other than temporarily and has failed to notify the cessation of activities (Sections 11 and 72a of the Alcohol Act). The licensing authority may then impose a penalty on the licence holder for the failure to notify (Section 71 of the Alcohol Act).

When the activity ends or is transferred to another party, the holder of a serving licence may sell their stock of alcoholic beverages to another licence holder without a wholesale licence. The buyer and seller are free to agree on the transfer price. When the activity ends, the stock of

alcoholic beverages may also be moved to another premises of the licence holder or be returned to the wholesaler. (Section 30 of the Alcohol Act.)

A document must be drawn up on the transfer of a stock of alcoholic beverages to a new owner or to another premises, and it must indicate the quantity of each alcoholic beverage handed over. The document is informal and must be submitted to the licensing authority within 30 days of the transfer of control, for example, by secure email. (Section 30 of the Alcohol Act.)

The licence holder must provide the licensing authority with the information concerning the sales completed by the closing date with a semi-annual report (Sections 62 of the Alcohol Act and Section 9 of the StmA).

5.13 Licence and supervision fees

Alcohol authorities charge processing fees for the license decisions they make. In addition, annual supervision fees are charged to the licence holders. The fees can be distrained without a court order or decision.

The Finnish Supervisory Agency's processing fees are regulated by a government decree. The current fee tables

can be found on the website of the Finnish Supervisory Agency and in the Annex to the Regulation.

If the party liable to pay considers that there has been an error in the determination of the processing fee, they may request a correction from the authority that determined the fee within six months of the determination of the fee in accordance with the Act on Criteria for Charges Payable to the State (150/1992).

The Finnish Supervisory Agency collects an annual supervision fee from the holders of permanent serving licences for each location. In addition, annual supervision fees are charged for extended serving hours and for retail sales. (Section 74 of the Alcohol Act and the Appendix to the Act.)

A supervision fee for serving is set for the previous calendar year's purchases or estimated purchases during a year-long calculation period calculated as 100% alcohol as follows:

- Less than 100 litres, EUR 105
- More than 100 litres but less than 2,000 litres, EUR 210
- More than 2,000 litres but less than 10,000 litres, EUR 420

- 10,000 litres or more, EUR 790.

There is a separate annual supervision fee of EUR 760 for extended hours if the serving hours are extended to 4 a.m. on more than 180 days per year, and otherwise, EUR 380. The supervision fee is determined by the number of days per year for which an extension until 4 a.m. has been reported or applied for.

The annual supervision fee for retail sales is EUR 200 per a sale point. The annual supervision fee for retail sales also applies to licensed premises with a retail sales license for alcoholic beverages with a maximum alcohol content of 8%, produced by fermentation, and with a maximum alcohol content of 5.5%, produced by other means.

No supervision fee is charged from a new retail or serving licence holder or from a new notification of an extension of serving hours during the first calendar year. The supervision fees on retail sales, licensed serving, and extended hours are invoiced per calendar year no later than 30 April, when the licence holder has had a valid licence on 1 April.

A correction of the supervision fee can be requested from the authority that imposed the fee. In a case concerning

the determination of a payment, an appeal must be lodged within three years from the beginning of the calendar year following the determination of the payment, but no later than 60 days from the receipt of the decision. (Section 80 of the Alcohol Act.)