



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## *Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control*

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CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER/SECRETARY TO THE BOARD  
W. CURTIS COLEBURN, III

### Circular Letter 13-03

To: Brewery Licensees

Subject: Registration/Product Approval of all Beer Sold in Virginia

Purpose: The purpose of this Circular Letter is to notify all brewery licensees that they must register and obtain product approval for all beer sold in the Commonwealth.

Background: The members of the Bureau of Law Enforcement's Compliance Unit are finding that many breweries are not obtaining approval for their products from our Tax Management Section prior to them being made available for sale in the Commonwealth. It is believed that many breweries are under the **mistaken** impression that if the beer they manufacture is only offered for sale in the Commonwealth, including sales only made at the brewery site, it is not necessary to obtain product approval from the Board.

Held: Brewery licensees are reminded that section 3 VAC 5-40-50 of the Board's Regulations requires that all beer sold in the Commonwealth must be first approved by the Board as to content, container and label. We understand that because breweries are not required to obtain federal label approval for their products which are only sold in Virginia, there may not be an actual label to submit to our Tax Management Section for approval. To facilitate the approval process for those beers for which there is no federally approved label, our Tax Management staff can provide an example that may be used by brewery licensees on which they would insert the brand, style and container size. Breweries may also develop their own label as long as it has the following required information: government warning, brand name, style, percentage of alcohol by volume, container size and statement that the product will not be sold outside of Virginia (this may be included on the label or a statement to this fact may be sent to Tax Management.) This information, along with the \$30.00 registration fee, should be submitted to our Tax Management Section for each style of beer sold in Virginia. Once approved, a five digit numeric code will be assigned to each product. This code is required to be used on all purchase orders and distributors invoices by breweries and wholesale licensees.

Brewery licensees are reminded that the sale of unapproved beer may result in disciplinary action being initiated which could result in the suspension of the license or imposition of a civil penalty.

Inquiries: Questions regarding the approval process for beer should be directed to our Tax Management Section at (804)-213-4497/4560 or [productapproval@abc.virginia.gov](mailto:productapproval@abc.virginia.gov)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "W. Curtis Coleburn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

W. Curtis Coleburn  
Chief Operating Officer/Secretary to the Board