



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control

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### Circular Letter

16-01

**Issue Date:** 01/27/16

**To:** Operators of Distillery Stores

**Subject:** Use of Distillery Store Premises for Events Organized and Conducted by Third Parties at Which Alcoholic Beverages are Served and Consumed.

**Purpose:** To communicate to distillery licensees operating an agency ABC store on their premises as authorized pursuant to Subsection D of §4.1-119, a change by the Department of ABC to permit the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages at events held in the area(s) approved as ABC store premises. This document also provides the parameters under which such events may be conducted.

**Background:** The Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control does not permit the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages in the designated ABC store area other than related to the sampling of spirits as authorized by the Code of Virginia §4.1-119 (G). As a point of clarification, §4.1-119 (G) prohibits the consumption of alcoholic beverages in a government store, except as a part of an organized tasting event which limits who may be provided samples, the number and size of such samples, and what products may be included. Many distillery ABC store operators authorized by §4.1-119 (D) have developed tasting room facilities that are well-suited for hosting public and private events such as wedding receptions and parties. Multiple requests have recently been received from distillery store operators to modify the limitation regarding the consumption of alcoholic beverages in the areas approved as the distillery store premises.

**Held:** The Department has determined that a distiller who operates an ABC Store on their premises pursuant to a written agreement with this agency may make the premises available for an event that involves the sale and or consumption of alcoholic

beverages conducted by a third party in the area(s) approved as store premises, subject to the following conditions:

1. The distiller shall give the Department five (5) business days advance notice of such event in writing to [compliance@abc.virginia.gov](mailto:compliance@abc.virginia.gov) . The notice shall contain the date of the event, the nature of the event and the contact information of the person in charge of the event and the hours the store will close and reopen.
2. The operating distiller must temporarily discontinue the operation of the ABC store during the entirety of the event.
3. During any such temporary discontinuation, no sales of Department inventory may be made from the government store, and the Department inventory must be secured.
4. If the distillery store operator's products are to be served at the event, any sales by the distillery store must be made prior to the closing of the store for the event.
5. Operation of the government store on the distiller's premises may not be resumed less than one hour following the end of the event.
6. Finally, all remaining alcoholic beverages used for the event must be removed from the distillery store premises prior to the store reopening.

Any event held on a distiller's licensed premises at which alcoholic beverages are sold or consumed must be appropriately licensed by the Department, if such licensing is required by law.

Questions regarding this topic should be addressed to your Compliance Senior Special Agent or [compliance@abc.virginia.gov](mailto:compliance@abc.virginia.gov).



Travis G. Hill

Chief Operation Officer/Secretary to the Board