



Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation

Liquor Licensing Fact Sheet

Responsible liquor advertising & promotions

This fact sheet sets clear standards for the conduct of licensees in relation to responsible liquor advertising and promotions.

The Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR) has the power to ban inappropriate advertising or promotions. The VCGLR may also seek to vary, suspend or cancel a liquor licence. In utilising these powers,

the VCGLR will take into account whether the promotion is likely to encourage irresponsible consumption of alcohol or is otherwise not in the public interest.

The following 16 principles provide licensees with a quick reference guide for responsible advertising and promotion of liquor. More detailed information is available in the 'Guidelines for responsible liquor advertising and promotions'.

Principles concerning the irresponsible consumption of liquor

Principle	Example of unacceptable practices
1. The advertising or promotion of liquor should not provide incentives that could lead to the rapid or excessive consumption of liquor.	Drinking games, competitions, dares or challenges that involve rapid or excessive consumption of liquor.
2. The advertising or promotion of liquor should not encourage the stockpiling of drinks by the consumer for consumption at the licensed premises.	Promotions that encourage or reward the purchase of, or drinking of, large amounts of liquor in a single session or transaction.
3. The advertising or promotion of liquor should not involve the availability of non-standard sized drinks or the availability of liquor in receptacles that encourage rapid drinking.	Serving liquor in a yard glass for skolling. Pouring liquor straight into patrons' mouths (e.g. pouring liquor directly from a bottle or shooting liquor from a water pistol).
4. The advertising or promotion of liquor must not condone or encourage rapid or excessive drinking, drunkenness or anti-social behaviour.	Advertising or promotion of events that focus mainly on the excessive consumption of liquor (binge-drinking as part of end of sporting season celebrations such as 'Mad Monday', or end of school year celebrations such as 'Schoolies Week' or 'after parties').
5. The advertising or promotion of liquor involving 'happy hours', free drinks or discounted drinks must have reasonable limits and controls to minimise the risk of rapid, excessive or irresponsible consumption of liquor.	Promotions involving extreme discounts (e.g. \$1 shots of spirits) or excessive periods of free drinks (e.g. \$50 entry and free drinks all night).
6. Where limited free liquor is advertised or promoted as ancillary to a product or service, the advertising or promotion must not place the free liquor as the primary focus.	Advertising that focuses exclusively on free alcohol where there are other activities to promote.
7. Where the advertising or promotion involves the inclusion of unlimited liquor within the entry price, the advertising or promotion must be consistent with responsible service of alcohol practices.	Advertising or promotions that explicitly focus on the 'all you can drink' element of the event by using terminology such as 'drink till you get smashed' or 'drink your money's worth'.

Public interest principles

Principle	Example of unacceptable practices
8. The advertising or promotion of liquor must avoid sexual, degrading, sexist or gratuitously offensive images, symbols, figures and innuendo.	Sexualised promotions that target women by offering free or reduced price alcohol combined with incentives to dress provocatively or remove their clothing (e.g. wet T-shirt competitions or '\$50 drink card for women who hang their undies behind the bar').
9. The advertising or promotion of liquor must not be linked to sexual imagery or imply sexual success.	Using sexual images that depict gratuitous use of nudity to promote the supply of liquor or the conduct of licensed premises (e.g. using nudity to promote home delivery of liquor).
10. The advertising or promotion of liquor must not suggest any association with risk taking, or with violent, aggressive, dangerous or anti-social behaviour.	The use of images or messages associating the consumption of liquor with risky or dangerous activities (e.g. sky diving, motor racing, drink driving, speed boating).
11. The advertising or promotion of liquor must not portray people or depict material in a way that discriminates against, vilifies or is demeaning to any person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief.	Advertising or promotions that use stereotyping to highlight racial differences or that make fun of personal characteristics such as disability.
12. The advertising or promotion of liquor must not suggest any association with, acceptance of, or allusion to, illicit drugs.	Using images, text or language that allude to drug taking behaviour or using props, settings or scenarios that link the promotion of liquor to illicit drugs.
13. The advertising or promotion of liquor must not encourage breaking the law.	Linking the consumption of liquor to drink driving or to breaking the law.
14. The advertising or promotion of liquor must not encourage under-age drinking.	Using characters, imagery, designs, motifs, interactive games, merchandise or media that are likely to appeal to minors.
15. The advertising or promotion of liquor must not incorporate images of people who are, or who appear to look under 18 years of age, unless there is no suggestion that they have just consumed, are consuming or are about to consume liquor.	Depicting models in settings primarily used by minors, even where the individuals used in the advertising or promotion are over 18 (e.g. schools, youth clubs).
16. The advertising or promotion of liquor should not be likely to place any group at risk of harm.	Promoting the availability of discounted liquor in ways that encourage excessive consumption by 'at risk' groups (e.g. window display promoting discounted liquor products with high alcohol content).

There are actions that licensees can take to reduce the risk by considering each of the elements below when planning liquor promotions:

Type and strength of liquor – Consider running promotions offering lower strength liquor products

Price – Consider limiting the discounting of liquor during a promotion, ensuring that reduction in price is not excessive.

Duration – By placing reasonable limits on the duration of your promotion, licensees can still provide opportunities to increase sales with reduced risk of irresponsible consumption (e.g. a 'happy hour' should not be '5 hours of happiness').

Frequency – Consider limiting the number of promotions that are held during a single trading period.

Timing/timeframe – After 10.00pm, the risk of patrons becoming intoxicated increases. Licensees are encouraged not to conduct promotions at high risk times.

Type of activity – the nature of the promotion itself may contribute to a culture of excessive or irresponsible drinking. For example, competitions, games, dares or challenges can create incentives for patrons to drink more. Licensees should carefully consider the type of promotion they are conducting.

This publication avoids the use of legal language. Information about the law may have been summarised or expressed in general statements. This information should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional legal advice or reference to the actual legislation. Authorised by the Victorian Government.