

Retail Liquor License Overview

Minnesota is relatively unusual among states in that almost all its retail liquor licenses are issued locally rather than by a state agency. This information brief describes the various types of retail licenses that are authorized by Minnesota law.

License/ Permit	Issued To	For What	Issued by Whom	Fee	Number (as of 4/04)
On-Sale and Combination Licenses					
<i>Intoxicating liquor on-sale</i>	Hotels, restaurants, bars, lounges, bowling centers, theaters	On-premise consumption of distilled spirits, wine, strong beer	Cities Counties*	Set locally	2,652
<i>Intoxicating liquor Sunday on-sale</i>	Restaurants, hotels, clubs, and bowling centers with regular intoxicating liquor on-sale license	On-premise consumption of intoxicating liquor on Sundays	Cities and counties where Sunday liquor referendums have passed	Up to \$200	2,452 (included in on-sale total)
<i>2 a.m. permit</i>	Establishments with on-sale intoxicating liquor license	Sale of intoxicating liquor between 1:00-2:00 a.m.	Department of Public Safety	\$200 to \$600, based on gross receipts from alcohol sales	837
* If approved by the Department of Public Safety					

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On-Sale and Combination Licenses					
<i>Wine on-sale</i>	Restaurants seating at least 25 guests	On-premise consumption of wine in conjunction with sale of food; may also sell strong beer if at least 60% of gross receipts come from sale of meals	Cities* Counties*	Half of on-sale fee, up to \$2,000	772
<i>Club on-sale</i>	Clubs in existence for at least 3 years	Sale of intoxicating liquor to members and "bona-fide guests"	Cities* Counties*	\$300-\$3,000, depending on number of members	490
<i>3.2 beer on-sale</i>	No limits on types of establishments	On-premise consumption of 3.2 beer	Cities Counties	Set locally	301
<i>Brewpub</i>	Licensed restaurants with brewing facilities	Operation of restaurant with on-sale of beer brewed on premises; also off-sale in 64 oz. bottles	Cities, counties for restaurant operation; Department of Public Safety for brewery operation	On-sale fee set locally; state brewery license \$500	19
<i>Bed & breakfast</i>	Owner-occupied B&Bs with up to 8 rooms, maximum of 20 guests	Service at no charge to guests of up to 2 glasses of wine per day	Registration required with Department of Public Safety	No fee	98
<i>Common carrier license</i>	Common carriers (air, rail, water)	Sale of intoxicating liquor to passengers in places where meals are sold	Department of Public Safety	Excursion boats on Lake Superior and St. Croix and Mississippi rivers: \$50 for 3.2 beer, \$200 for liquor; other fees not specified	28
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On-Sale and Combination Licenses					
<i>Combination licenses - intoxicating liquor</i>	Establishments eligible for on-sale and off-sale license	Sales of intoxicating liquor for on-premise and off-premise consumption	Cities under 10,000 (Counties may also issue in non-urban towns)	Not specified	1,140
<i>Temporary on-sale intoxicating liquor</i>	Clubs and nonprofit organizations in existence for at least 6 years, political committees	Sale of intoxicating liquor for on-premise consumption at an event sponsored by licensee; valid for up to 4 consecutive days	Cities* Counties*	Set locally	1,594
<i>Consumption and display permits</i>	Clubs and "business establishments"	Allowing customers to bring own supply of liquor (set-ups); allowing customers to store own supply of liquor on premises (bottle club)	Department of Public Safety (local approval required)	\$150 (city or county may impose additional fee up to \$300)	403
<i>Caterer's permit</i>	Restaurant with on-sale intoxicating liquor license	Sale of intoxicating liquor as part of meal service at a location other than the restaurant's licensed premises	Department of Public Safety	\$200	150
<i>Combination licenses - 3.2 beer</i>	No limits on types of establishments	Sale of 3.2 beer both for on-premise and off-premise consumption	Cities Counties	Set locally	68
Off-Sale Licenses					
<i>Intoxicating liquor off-sale</i>	Exclusive liquor stores Grocery stores (in 1 st class cities if licensed before 8/1/89) Drug stores (if licensed before 5/1/94)	Sale of intoxicating liquor for off-premise consumption; exclusive liquor stores may also sell tobacco, ice, soft drinks, mixes, food products containing alcohol	Cities (1 st class cities, 1 per 5,000 pop.; other cities, no limit) Counties (in unorganized territory and urban towns)	City-issued: Maximums from \$100 to \$1,000 based on population County-issued: maximum \$500	777
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Off-Sale Licenses					
3.2 beer off-sale	No limits on types of establishments	Off-premise consumption of 3.2 beer	Cities Counties	Up to \$500	295
Wine auction - temporary	No limits on types of establishments	Auctions of vintage wine (maximum 600 cases per auction) for up to 3 consecutive days	Cities* Counties*	Set locally	3
Farm winery	Farm producing wine made primarily from Minnesota ingredients	On- and off-sale and wholesale of wine produced on-premises, up to 50,000 gallons per year	Department of Public Safety	\$50	15
Other Licenses/Operations					
Municipal liquor stores	On-sale or off-sale, or both	Sale of intoxicating liquor; on-sale stores may sell meals	Cities 10,000 and under (may continue to operate after exceeding 10,000)	No license issued; municipally owned and operated	259
Tribal licenses	Establishments eligible for on-sale or off-sale licenses	On-sales, off-sales, or both depending on type issued	Tribal governing bodies	Set locally	19
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For more information about liquor regulation, visit the commerce area of our web site, www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/issinfo/comm_ed.htm.