



## Quick Guide: Out-of-State Suppliers, Manufacturers, Importers

The following quick guide addresses common questions asked by out-of-state suppliers (e.g. manufacturers and importers) regarding the distribution of alcoholic beverages in the District of Columbia. Specific topics addressed by this quick guide are distribution; exportation; importation; product registration; and taxes.

### **How can an out-of-state supplier legally distribute or sell alcoholic beverages in the District of Columbia?**

There are three ways to have alcoholic beverages located outside the District of Columbia sold or distributed within the District of Columbia:

- (1) An out-of-state supplier may have a D.C. licensed wholesaler distribute their product so long as the supplier is the primary American source (i.e., a brand's authorized agent);
- (2) An out-of-state supplier may directly ship alcoholic beverages to a D.C.- licensed retailer so long as the retailer obtains a Retailer's Import Permit from the Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA) before the shipment occurs; or
- (3) An out-of-state supplier may directly ship up to 12 bottles of alcoholic beverages of any size and type to a single resident in a one-month period without a license or permit.

### **If providing alcoholic beverages to a D.C. licensed wholesaler or manufacturer, must the out-of-state supplier register the products, provide any federal permits or licenses, or obtain any other licenses or permits from ABRA?**

No, the alcohol laws of the District of Columbia do not require out-of-state suppliers to register their products, provide ABRA with any federal licenses or permits, like Certificates of Label Approval (COLA) issued by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, or obtain any other license or permit issued by ABRA (e.g., direct shipping permit). Under District law, the wholesaler or manufacturer is responsible for ensuring alcoholic beverages in their possession are distributed legally.

### **Must an out-of-state supplier seek the approval of ABRA before introducing a new label or product or changing the price of products on the market?**

No, ABRA does not pre-approve labels, require the submission of COLAs, require

This Quick Guide is current as of December 2017. It does not include all District of Columbia alcoholic beverage rules and regulations. District of Columbia Official Code Title 25 provides a comprehensive review of all District alcoholic beverage laws.

out-of-state suppliers to register their products, or require the submission of the prices of products before they may be legally sold.

### **Does ABRA require out-of-state suppliers to file any reports?**

No, the District's alcohol laws do not require out-of-state suppliers to file regular reports to ABRA regarding their activities or sales in the District of Columbia.

### **Does ABRA restrict the export of alcoholic beverages from the District of Columbia to another jurisdiction?**

No, licensees may export alcohol from the District of Columbia to another state or jurisdiction so long as they are authorized to sell closed containers. Licensees should ensure that they comply with the receiving jurisdiction's laws and regulations, as they may differ from the laws of the District of Columbia.

### **Does ABRA require an out-of-state supplier to appoint a distributor?**

No, the District's alcohol laws do not require out-of-state suppliers to appoint a D.C. licensed wholesaler as their distributor or otherwise require out-of-state suppliers to notify ABRA that such a relationship exists. The District's alcohol laws do not limit the number of distribution agreements that may be entered into at one time (i.e., no exclusivity requirement).

### **Does ABRA regulate the termination of distribution agreements?**

No, the termination of a distributor agreement between an out-of-state supplier and a wholesaler is not regulated by ABRA, nor does ABRA need to be notified.

### **Where should I address questions about alcohol-related taxes?**

ABRA does not have jurisdiction over tax-related matters. All tax questions should be addressed to the District of Columbia Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR). OTR's contact information is as follows:

- Address: 1101 4th Street, SW, Suite 270 West, Washington, DC 20024
- Phone: (202) 727-4829
- TTY: 711
- Email: [taxhelp@dc.gov](mailto:taxhelp@dc.gov)

### **ABRA CONTACT INFORMATION**

For more information, visit [ABRA.DC.Gov](http://ABRA.DC.Gov) or contact ABRA at 202-442-4423 or [ABRA@DC.Gov](mailto:ABRA@DC.Gov).