



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission
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“7-STORE LIMIT” INCREASES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2020

In 2011, the Legislature passed a law increasing from 7 to 9 the number of off-premises (§ 15) licenses any person or combination of persons may hold, directly or indirectly, in Massachusetts, starting January 1, 2020. Persons who wish to take advantage of this increase may file an application for additional § 15 licenses with the local licensing authorities on or after Wednesday, January 1, 2020. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 138, § 15A, the local licensing authorities must note the date and time of any application is filed with them and must not vote to approve the granting of any such license until January 1, 2020.

Applicants that hold more than three § 15 licenses are required to pay the ABCC a \$5,000 fee for each license over three (3) that they are approved to hold. This fee is due after the ABCC approves the license, but before the local licensing authorities issue the license. The ABCC will deposit this fee into the Commonwealth’s General Fund.

Please remember that this law has no effect on the number of available licenses within each city or town. The number of licenses available within each city or town is based on population and is set by a statutory formula found in M.G.L. c. 138, § 17. Furthermore, any person or combination of persons may only hold one (1) license directly or indirectly in a town, and two (2) licenses directly or indirectly in a city. This law does not amend these statutory limitations; it only increases the statewide maximum number of § 15 licenses a person or combination of persons can own from 7 to 9.

As always, all licensees must ensure that they are in compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and that sales of alcoholic beverages take place only as authorized by state law.

(Issued October 16, 2019)