

Chapter 820

(House Bill 564)

AN ACT concerning

Dorchester County – Alcoholic Beverages – Venue Beer, Wine, and Liquor License

FOR the purpose of establishing in Dorchester County a venue beer, wine, and liquor license that authorizes the holder to sell or serve beer, wine, and liquor for on–premises consumption during an event where food is served; authorizing the Board of License Commissioners for Dorchester County to issue the license to a nonprofit or for–profit retail business that hosts private or public events at a venue that meets certain criteria; authorizing the Board to issue the license to an establishment that is within a certain distance of a place of worship or school with the written consent of the place of worship or school; and generally relating to alcoholic beverages licenses in Dorchester County.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis
Section 19–102
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2024 Replacement Volume)

BY adding to
Article – Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis
Section 19–1001
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2024 Replacement Volume)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis
Section 19–1601
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2024 Replacement Volume)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis

19–102.

This title applies only in Dorchester County.

19–1001.

(A) **THERE IS A VENUE BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR LICENSE.**

(B) **THE BOARD MAY ISSUE THE LICENSE TO A NONPROFIT OR FOR-PROFIT RETAIL BUSINESS THAT HOSTS WEDDINGS, BANQUETS, PARTIES, MEETINGS, AND SIMILAR EVENTS, WHETHER PRIVATE OR OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, AT A VENUE THAT:**

(1) **IS AT LEAST 2,000 SQUARE FEET IN SIZE;**

(2) **CAN ACCOMMODATE AT LEAST 100 INDIVIDUALS FOR A SINGLE EVENT, WHETHER INSIDE THE VENUE OR OUTSIDE ON THE VENUE'S PREMISES; AND**

(3) **HAS ADEQUATE BATHROOM FACILITIES.**

(C) (1) **THE LICENSE AUTHORIZES THE LICENSE HOLDER TO SELL OR SERVE BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR AT RETAIL, BY THE DRINK OR BY THE BOTTLE, FOR ON-PREMISES CONSUMPTION:**

(I) **DURING AN EVENT HOSTED BY THE LICENSE HOLDER AT THE LICENSE HOLDER'S VENUE; AND**

(II) **ONLY IF FOOD IS ALSO PROVIDED DURING THE EVENT.**

(2) **A LICENSE HOLDER MAY NOT ALLOW AN INDIVIDUAL TO CARRY BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR ONTO OR OFF THE LICENSED PREMISES.**

(D) **THE LICENSE MAY NOT BE TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER LOCATION.**

(E) **THE LICENSE HOLDER MAY SELL BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR DURING THE HOURS AND DAYS AS SET OUT FOR A CLASS B BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR LICENSE UNDER § 19-2005 OF THIS TITLE.**

(F) **THE ANNUAL FEE FOR THE LICENSE IS \$1,500.**

(G) **THE BOARD MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS SECTION.**

19-1601.

(a) (1) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, the Board may not issue a new license for an establishment that is within 300 feet in a direct line of a place of worship or a public or nonpublic kindergarten, elementary, or secondary school.

(2) The distance from the establishment to the place of worship or the public or nonpublic kindergarten, elementary, or secondary school is to be measured from

the establishment in a direct line to the nearest point of the main building of the place of worship or school.

(b) The prohibition against issuing a license in subsection (a) of this section does not apply to the issuance of:

(1) a license for a premises that was licensed on October 1, 1996;

(2) a Class B (on-sale) beer, wine, and liquor license for a premises in Cambridge, Secretary, or Hurlock; [or]

(3) a temporary license; OR

(4) A VENUE BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR LICENSE IF THE BOARD RECEIVES WRITTEN CONSENT TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE LICENSE FROM EACH PLACE OF WORSHIP OR SCHOOL LOCATED WITHIN 300 FEET IN A DIRECT LINE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT FOR WHICH THE LICENSE IS SOUGHT.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Approved by the Governor, May 20, 2025.