

**State of California**

**BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE**

**Section 25503.56**

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25503.56. (a) An authorized licensee, or a designated representative of an authorized licensee acting as an agent of the authorized licensee, may conduct, on the area specified by paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 23396.6, an instructional tasting event for consumers on the subject of wine, beer, or distilled spirits, including, but not limited to, the history, nature, values, and characteristics of wine, beer, or distilled spirits, and the methods of presenting and serving wine, beer, or distilled spirits.

(1) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the instructional tasting event may include the serving of alcoholic beverages to an attendee of legal drinking age. An instructional tasting event on the subject of wine or distilled spirits shall be limited to not more than three tastings per person per day. A single tasting of distilled spirits shall not exceed one-fourth of one ounce and a single tasting of wine shall not exceed one ounce. An instructional tasting event on the subject of beer shall be limited to not more than the tasting of eight ounces of beer per person per day. The wine, beer, or distilled spirits tasted shall be limited to the products that are authorized to be sold by the authorized licensee and the licenseholder under its off-sale license.

(B) A beer and wine wholesaler may conduct an instructional tasting event but shall not serve tastes of beer unless the beer and wine wholesaler also holds a beer manufacturer's license, an out-of-state beer manufacturer's certificate, or more than six distilled spirits wholesaler's licenses.

(C) No charge of any sort shall be made for the tastings. Except for the purposes of Section 23985, the serving of tastings shall not be deemed a sale of products pursuant to this division.

(D) A person under 21 years of age shall not serve wine, beer, or distilled spirits at the instructional tasting event.

(E) All tastes shall be served by an employee of the authorized licensee, the designated representative of the authorized licensee, or by an employee of the designated representative of the authorized licensee.

(F) An authorized licensee, or a designated representative of an authorized licensee, shall either supply the wine or distilled spirits to be tasted during the instructional tasting event or purchase the wine or distilled spirits from the licenseholder at the original invoiced cost. An authorized licensee, or a designated representative of an authorized licensee, shall purchase beer to be tasted during the instructional tasting event from the licenseholder at the original invoiced cost.

(G) Any unused wine, beer, or distilled spirits remaining from the tasting shall be removed from the off-sale licensed premises by the authorized licensee or its designated representative.

(2) If the instructional tasting event is conducted by a designated representative of an authorized licensee, the designated representative shall not be owned, controlled, or employed directly or indirectly by the licenseholder on whose premises the instructional tasting event is held.

(3) An instructional tasting event shall be limited to a single type of alcoholic beverage. For purposes of this paragraph, "type of alcoholic beverage" means distilled spirits, wine, or beer.

(b) For purposes of this section:

(1) "Authorized licensee" means a winegrower, California winegrower's agent, beer and wine importer general, beer and wine wholesaler, wine rectifier, craft distiller, distilled spirits manufacturer, distilled spirits manufacturer's agent, distilled spirits importer general, distilled spirits rectifier, distilled spirits general rectifier, rectifier, out-of-state distilled spirits shipper's certificate holder, distilled spirits wholesaler, brandy manufacturer, brandy importer, California brandy wholesaler, beer manufacturer, or an out-of-state beer manufacturer certificate holder. "Authorized licensee" shall not include an entity that solely holds a combination of a beer and wine wholesale license and an off-sale beer and wine retail license or holds those licenses solely in combination with any license not listed in this paragraph, or holds a limited off-sale retail wine license.

(2) "Licenseholder" means an off-sale retail licensee issued an instructional tasting license pursuant to Section 23396.6.

(3) "Location" means the total contiguous area encompassed by the off-sale and on-sale licenses.

(c) Notwithstanding subparagraph (E) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a), a licenseholder may conduct an instructional tasting event that includes the serving of tastings only when an authorized licensee or its designated representative are unable to conduct an instructional tasting event previously advertised pursuant to this section and scheduled by the authorized licensee or its designated representative, provided that the licenseholder supplies the wine, beer, or distilled spirits used in the instructional tasting event and provides or pays for a person to serve the wine, beer, or distilled spirits. Instructional tasting events conducted by a licenseholder pursuant to this subdivision are subject to the provisions of this section and Section 23396.6.

(d) No more than one authorized licensee, or its designated representative, may conduct an instructional tasting event that includes the serving of tastes of wine, beer, or distilled spirits at any one individual licensed premises of a licenseholder per day.

(e) A licenseholder that also holds an on-sale beer and wine license, an on-sale beer and wine eating place license, or an on-sale general license shall not allow an authorized licensee, or its designated representative, to conduct an instructional tasting event on the same day and at the same location as any instructional tasting event held pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 23386, Section 25503.4, subdivision (c) of Section 25503.5, or Section 25503.55.

(f) A licenseholder shall not condition the allowance of an instructional tasting event upon the use of a particular designated representative of an authorized licensee.

(g) In addition to any point-of-sale advertising or other advertising items allowed under this division or under rules of the department, an authorized licensee or its designated representative, in their absolute discretion and with permission of the licenseholder upon whose premises the instructional tasting event will be held, may list in any advertisement to the general public for the instructional tasting event the name, address, telephone number, email address, internet website address, and any other electronic media of the licenseholder, the names of the alcoholic beverages being featured at the instructional tasting event, pictures, illustrations, and depictions of the retailer's premises, personnel, and customers, and the time, date, and location of, and other information about, the instructional tasting event, provided that both of the following apply:

(1) The advertisement does not contain the retail price of the alcoholic beverages.

(2) The listing of the licenseholder's name, address, telephone number, email address, internet website address, and any other electronic media in the advertisement, and any pictures, illustrations, or depictions, are relatively inconspicuous in relation to the advertisement as a whole. Laudatory references to the licenseholder in these advertisements are not authorized. Pictures, illustrations, or depictions shall be still pictures, illustrations, or depictions only and shall not include any video. The reposting of social media posts, including posts by the retailer, is permitted provided that the reposting complies with all the requirements of this section. Nothing in this section shall authorize an authorized licensee or its designated representative to share in the costs, if any, of the licenseholder.

(h) A licenseholder may advertise an instructional tasting event to the general public. The costs of this advertising shall be borne solely by the licenseholder. Advertising permitted by this subdivision includes flyers, newspaper ads, internet communications, and interior signage.

(i) Except as otherwise provided in this division or rules of the department, no premium, gift, free goods, or other thing of value shall be given away by an authorized licensee or its designated representative in connection with an instructional tasting event that includes tastings of an alcoholic beverage.

(j) The licenseholder or the authorized licensee or its designated representative is authorized to perform setup and breakdown of the instructional tasting event area. The authorized licensee or its designated representative may provide, free of charge to the licenseholder, the equipment, materials, and utensils as may be required for use in connection with the instructional tasting event.

(k) (1) A licenseholder shall not require, or enter into a collusive scheme with, an authorized licensee or its designated representative to conduct one or more instructional tasting events as a condition of the licenseholder's carrying or continuing to carry a brand or brands of the authorized licensee or as a condition for display or other merchandising plan which is based on an agreement to provide shelf space. An authorized licensee or its designated representative shall not require any preferential treatment or benefit from, or enter into a collusive scheme with, a licenseholder as a

condition of conducting one or more instructional tasting events, require a licenseholder to carry or continue to carry a brand or brands of the authorized licensee as a condition of conducting one or more instructional tasting events, or condition display or other merchandising plans that are based on agreements for the provision of shelf space on the conducting of one or more instructional tasting events. Any agreement, whether written or oral, entered into by and between a licenseholder and an authorized licensee or its designated representative that precludes the conducting of instructional tasting events on the premises of the licenseholder by any other authorized licensee is prohibited. A licenseholder or authorized licensee, or its designated representative, shall not use an instructional tasting event to circumvent any other requirements of this division.

(2) In addition to any other remedies available under this division, upon a finding by the department of a failure to comply with this subdivision, the department shall suspend the instructional tasting license of the licenseholder and the privilege of the authorized licensee to conduct instructional events for not less than six months but for no more than one year.

(l) The Legislature finds that it is necessary and proper to require a separation between manufacturing interests, wholesale interests, and retail interests in the production and distribution of alcoholic beverages in order to prevent suppliers from dominating local markets through vertical integration and to prevent excessive sales of alcoholic beverages produced by overly aggressive marketing techniques. The Legislature further finds that the exception established by this section to the general prohibition against tied interests must be limited to its express terms so as not to undermine the general prohibition, and intends that this section be construed accordingly.

(Amended by Stats. 2019, Ch. 257, Sec. 4. (SB 788) Effective September 5, 2019.)