



Manitoba Liquor Control Commission

News Release

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New Hospitality Options Start Canada Day Long Weekend

Extended hours for licensed premises and socials, as well as strict rules for public disorder, will take effect on Canada Day as part of recent amendments to Manitoba's Liquor Control Act, which became law on June 16.

As of July 1, 2011, the optional closing time for all classes of licence will be 2:00 a.m. and 2:30 a.m. for retail beer vendors. The amendments also include an optional extension to operating hours for permit functions, such as socials, to 2:00 a.m.

Ken Hildahl, MLCC President and CEO says the standardized operating hours are welcomed by the hospitality industry and are intended to clear up confusion caused by different operating hours, particularly during long weekends.

"Permit events will be able to operate an hour longer this Canada Day long weekend, while patrons of licensed premises will appreciate the longer Sunday night hours on the August long weekend, said Hildahl. "No longer will cabarets and beverage rooms have to close at midnight on the Sunday of a long weekend."

While standardized hours may be welcomed by patrons of licensed premises, Hildahl noted that the change is balanced with greater responsibility for licensees. Wording changes to the Act more clearly spell out expectations for licensees outside their premises and property, including the immediate vicinity, such as on the sidewalk in front of their premises and in neighbouring parking lots.

The Act changes also included initiatives to ensure greater public safety in licensed premises. Hildahl said liquor inspectors and police constables now have the authority to immediately close a premises for up to 12 hours when there is imminent risk to the public, such as an act of violence. Fines for disorderly conduct will also now be among the toughest in Canada, generally increasing from \$292 to \$655.

Amendments now in effect include authority for the MLCC to establish up to 10 Liquor Mart boutiques, including up to five in urban grocery stores. Hildahl said the first store of this type will be a Liquor Mart Express to open this fall in the Arrivals area of the James Richardson International Airport. To help determine appropriate locations for the boutique stores within grocery stores, he said the MLCC will call for an expression of interest from grocery stores on July 2, 2011.

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Hildahl said one of the most anticipated changes has been a new class of licence for brew pubs. Hildahl said the licence will come into effect November 1 to allow the MLCC time to develop the necessary regulations and licensing requirements. He said that response to the new licence class has been very positive.

“We’ve had several discussions with restaurateurs and business owners who are very interested in investing in this type of operation and are excited about the growth prospects for the future,” said Hildahl.

Other changes such as the voluntary bring-your-own-wine (BYOW) program for licensed restaurants will take effect this fall. Hildahl said the MLCC is working with the Manitoba Restaurant Association on the development of guidelines for the industry and expects to implement the program on or by November 1. He added that over the next several months the MLCC would also work with the Manitoba Hotel Association in the development of selection criteria to allow beer vendors to sell coolers and ciders.

The MLCC has also begun implementing some of the policy changes under the New Hospitality Strategy. Hildahl said staff will spend the next several weeks and months in the development of guidelines and regulatory requirements.

Family Services Minister Gord Mackintosh, minister responsible for the Liquor Control Act, said the reaction to the New Hospitality Strategy and amendments to the Liquor Control Act have been very positive.

“These amendments are designed to modernize Manitoba’s liquor laws within a framework of social responsibility,” said Mackintosh. “Public and industry support has been tremendous and we believe the groundwork has been laid for new investment in a fun and safe hospitality industry.”

Changes to Manitoba’s liquor laws and information on the New Hospitality Strategy will be posted on the MLCC’s web site at www.mlcc.mb.ca