

340A.301 MANUFACTURERS AND WHOLESALERS LICENSES.

Subdivision 1. **Licenses required.** No person may directly or indirectly manufacture or sell at wholesale intoxicating liquor, or 3.2 percent malt liquor without obtaining an appropriate license from the commissioner, except where otherwise provided in this chapter. A manufacturer's license includes the right to import. A licensed brewer may sell the brewer's products at wholesale only if the brewer has been issued a wholesaler's license. The commissioner shall issue a wholesaler's license to a brewer only if (1) the commissioner determines that the brewer was selling the brewer's own products at wholesale in Minnesota on January 1, 1991, or (2) the brewer has acquired a wholesaler's business or assets under subdivision 7a, paragraph (c) or (d). A licensed wholesaler of intoxicating malt liquor may sell 3.2 percent malt liquor at wholesale without an additional license.

Subd. 2. **Persons eligible.** (a) Licenses under this section may be issued only to a person who:

(1) is of good moral character and repute;

(2) is 21 years of age or older;

(3) has not had a license issued under this chapter revoked within five years of the date of license application, or to any person who at the time of the violation owns any interest, whether as a holder of more than five percent of the capital stock of a corporation licensee, as a partner or otherwise, in the premises or in the business conducted thereon, or to a corporation, partnership, association, enterprise, business, or firm in which any such person is in any manner interested; and

(4) has not been convicted within five years of the date of license application of a felony, or of a willful violation of a federal or state law, or local ordinance governing the manufacture, sale, distribution, or possession for sale or distribution of alcoholic beverages. The Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division may require that fingerprints be taken and may forward the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for purposes of a criminal history check.

(b) In order to determine if an individual has a felony or willful violation of federal or state law governing the manufacture, sale, distribution, or possession for sale or distribution of an alcoholic beverage, the applicant for a license to manufacture or sell at wholesale must provide the commissioner with their signed, written informed consent to conduct a background check. The commissioner may query the Minnesota criminal history repository for records on the applicant. If the commissioner conducts a national criminal history record check, the commissioner must obtain fingerprints from the applicant and forward them and the required fee to the superintendent of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. The superintendent may exchange the fingerprints with the Federal Bureau of Investigation for purposes of obtaining the applicant's national criminal history record information. The superintendent shall return the results of the national criminal history records check to the commissioner for the purpose of determining if the applicant is qualified to receive a license.

Subd. 3. **Application.** An application for a license under this section must be made to the commissioner on a form the commissioner prescribes and must be accompanied by the fee specified in subdivision 6. If an application is denied, \$100 of the amount of any fee exceeding that amount shall be retained by the commissioner to cover costs of investigation.

Subd. 4. **Bond.** The commissioner may not issue a license under this section to a person who has not filed a bond with corporate surety, or cash, or United States government bonds payable to the state. The proof of financial responsibility must be approved by the commissioner before the license is issued. The bond must be conditioned on the licensee obeying all laws governing the business and paying when due all taxes, fees, penalties and other charges, and must provide that

it is forfeited to the state on a violation of law. This subdivision does not apply to a Minnesota farm winery, licensed under section 340A.315, that is in existence as of January 1, 2010. Bonds must be in the following amounts:

Manufacturers and wholesalers of intoxicating liquor except as provided in this subdivision	\$	10,000
Manufacturers and wholesalers of wine up to 25 percent alcohol by weight	\$	5,000
Manufacturers and wholesalers of beer of more than 3.2 percent alcohol by weight	\$	1,000
Manufacturers and wholesalers of fewer than 20,000 proof gallons	\$	2,000
Manufacturers and wholesalers of 20,000 to 40,000 proof gallons	\$	3,000

Subd. 5. **Period of license.** Licenses issued under this section are valid for one year except that to coordinate expiration dates initial licenses may be issued for a shorter period.

Subd. 6. **Fees.** The annual fees for licenses under this section are as follows:

(a) Manufacturers (except as provided in clauses (b) and (c))	\$	30,000
Duplicates	\$	3,000
(b) Manufacturers of wines of not more than 25 percent alcohol by volume	\$	500
(c) Brewers who manufacture more than 3,500 barrels of malt liquor in a year	\$	4,000
(d) Brewers who also hold one or more retail on-sale licenses and who manufacture fewer than 3,500 barrels of malt liquor in a year, at any one licensed premises, the entire production of which is solely for consumption on tap on any licensed premises owned by the brewer, or for off-sale from those licensed premises as permitted in subdivision 7. A brewer licensed under this clause must obtain a separate license for each licensed premises where the brewer brews malt liquor. A brewer licensed under this clause may not be licensed as an importer under this chapter	\$	500
(e) Wholesalers (except as provided in clauses (f), (g), and (h))	\$	15,000
Duplicates	\$	3,000
(f) Wholesalers of wines of not more than 25 percent alcohol by volume	\$	3,750
(g) Wholesalers of intoxicating malt liquor	\$	1,000
Duplicates	\$	25

(h) Wholesalers of 3.2 percent malt liquor	\$	10
(i) Brewers who manufacture fewer than 2,000 barrels of malt liquor in a year	\$	150
(j) Brewers who manufacture 2,000 to 3,500 barrels of malt liquor in a year	\$	500

If a business licensed under this section is destroyed, or damaged to the extent that it cannot be carried on, or if it ceases because of the death or illness of the licensee, the commissioner may refund the license fee for the balance of the license period to the licensee or to the licensee's estate.

Subd. 6a. **Permits and fees.** Any person engaged in the purchase, sale, or use for any purpose other than personal consumption of intoxicating alcoholic beverages or ethyl alcohol shall obtain the appropriate regulatory permit and identification card from the commissioner as provided in this subdivision. The fee for each permit, other than one issued to a state or federal agency, is \$35 and must be submitted together with the appropriate application form provided by the commissioner. Identification cards and permits must be issued for a period coinciding with that of the appropriate state or municipal license and are not transferable. In instances where there is no annual license period, cards and permits expire one year after the date of issuance. The authority to engage in the purchase, sale, or use granted by the card or permit may be revoked by the commissioner upon evidence of a violation by the holder of such a card or permit of any of the provisions of chapter 340A or any rule of the commissioner made pursuant to law.

Subd. 6b. **Brewer taproom license.** (a) A municipality, including a city with a municipal liquor store, may issue the holder of a brewer's license under subdivision 6, clause (c), (i), or (j), a brewer taproom license. A brewer taproom license authorizes on-sale of malt liquor produced by the brewer for consumption on the premises of or adjacent to one brewery location owned by the brewer. Nothing in this subdivision precludes the holder of a brewer taproom license from also holding a license to operate a restaurant at the brewery. Section 340A.409 shall apply to a license issued under this subdivision. All provisions of this chapter that apply to a retail liquor license shall apply to a license issued under this subdivision unless the provision is explicitly inconsistent with this subdivision.

(b) A brewer may only have one taproom license under this subdivision, and may not have an ownership interest in a brewery licensed under subdivision 6, clause (d).

(c) A municipality may not issue a brewer taproom license to a brewer if the brewer seeking the license, or any person having an economic interest in the brewer seeking the license or exercising control over the brewer seeking the license, is a brewer that brews more than 250,000 barrels of malt liquor annually or a winery that produces more than 250,000 gallons of wine annually.

(d) The municipality shall impose a licensing fee on a brewer holding a brewer taproom license under this subdivision, subject to limitations applicable to license fees under section 340A.408, subdivision 2, paragraph (a).

(e) A municipality shall, within ten days of the issuance of a license under this subdivision, inform the commissioner of the licensee's name and address and trade name, and the effective date and expiration date of the license. The municipality shall also inform the commissioner of a license transfer, cancellation, suspension, or revocation during the license period.

Subd. 6c. **Microdistilleries.** (a) A microdistillery may provide on its premises samples of distilled spirits manufactured on its premises, in an amount not to exceed 15 milliliters per

variety per person. No more than 45 milliliters may be sampled under this paragraph by any person on any day.

(b) The commissioner shall establish a fee for licensing microdistilleries that adequately covers the cost of issuing the license and other inspection requirements. The fees shall be deposited in an account in the special revenue fund and are appropriated to the commissioner for the purposes of this subdivision.

Subd. 6d. Small brewer license. (a) A brewer licensed under subdivision 6, clause (c), (i), or (j), may be issued a license by a municipality for off-sale of malt liquor at its licensed premises that has been produced and packaged by the brewer. The license must be approved by the commissioner. The amount of malt liquor sold at off-sale may not exceed 500 barrels annually. Off-sale of malt liquor shall be limited to the legal hours for off-sale at exclusive liquor stores in the jurisdiction in which the brewer is located, and the malt liquor sold off-sale must be removed from the premises before the applicable off-sale closing time at exclusive liquor stores. The malt liquor shall be packed in 64-ounce containers commonly known as "growlers" or in 750 milliliter bottles. The containers or bottles shall bear a twist-type closure, cork, stopper, or plug. At the time of the sale, a paper or plastic adhesive band, strip, or sleeve shall be applied to the container or bottle and extended over the top of the twist-type closure, cork, stopper, or plug forming a seal that must be broken upon opening of the container or bottle. The adhesive band, strip, or sleeve shall bear the name and address of the brewer. The containers or bottles shall be identified as malt liquor, contain the name of the malt liquor, bear the name and address of the brewer selling the malt liquor, and shall be considered intoxicating liquor unless the alcoholic content is labeled as otherwise in accordance with the provisions of Minnesota Rules, part 7515.1100.

(b) A brewer may only have one license under this subdivision.

(c) A municipality may not issue a license under this subdivision to a brewer if the brewer seeking the license, or any person having an economic interest in the brewer seeking the license or exercising control over the brewer seeking the license, is a brewer that brews more than 20,000 barrels of its own brands of malt liquor annually or a winery that produces more than 250,000 gallons of wine annually.

(d) The municipality shall impose a licensing fee on a brewer holding a license under this subdivision, subject to limitations applicable to license fees under section 340A.408, subdivision 3, paragraph (a).

Subd. 7. Interest in other business. (a) Except as provided in this subdivision, a holder of a license as a manufacturer, brewer, importer, or wholesaler may not have any ownership, in whole or in part, in a business holding a retail intoxicating liquor or 3.2 percent malt liquor license. The commissioner may not issue a license under this section to a manufacturer, brewer, importer, or wholesaler if a retailer of intoxicating liquor has a direct or indirect interest in the manufacturer, brewer, importer, or wholesaler. A manufacturer or wholesaler of intoxicating liquor may use or have property rented for retail intoxicating liquor sales only if the manufacturer or wholesaler has owned the property continuously since November 1, 1933. A retailer of intoxicating liquor may not use or have property rented for the manufacture or wholesaling of intoxicating liquor.

(b) A brewer licensed under subdivision 6, clause (d), may be issued an on-sale intoxicating liquor or 3.2 percent malt liquor license by a municipality for a restaurant operated in the place of manufacture. Notwithstanding section 340A.405, a brewer who holds an on-sale license issued pursuant to this paragraph may, with the approval of the commissioner, be issued a license by a

municipality for off-sale of malt liquor produced and packaged on the licensed premises. Off-sale of malt liquor shall be limited to the legal hours for off-sale at exclusive liquor stores in the jurisdiction in which the brewer is located, and the malt liquor sold off-sale must be removed from the premises before the applicable off-sale closing time at exclusive liquor stores. The malt liquor shall be packaged in 64-ounce containers commonly known as "growlers" or in 750 milliliter bottles. The containers or bottles shall bear a twist-type closure, cork, stopper, or plug. At the time of the sale, a paper or plastic adhesive band, strip, or sleeve shall be applied to the container or bottle and extend over the top of the twist-type closure, cork, stopper, or plug forming a seal that must be broken upon opening of the container or bottle. The adhesive band, strip, or sleeve shall bear the name and address of the brewer. The containers or bottles shall be identified as malt liquor, contain the name of the malt liquor, bear the name and address of the brewer selling the malt liquor, and shall be considered intoxicating liquor unless the alcoholic content is labeled as otherwise in accordance with the provisions of Minnesota Rules, part 7515.1100. A brewer's total retail sales at on- or off-sale under this paragraph may not exceed 3,500 barrels per year, provided that off-sales may not total more than 500 barrels. A brewer licensed under subdivision 6, clause (d), may hold or have an interest in other retail on-sale licenses, but may not have an ownership interest in whole or in part, or be an officer, director, agent, or employee of, any other manufacturer, brewer, importer, or wholesaler, or be an affiliate thereof whether the affiliation is corporate or by management, direction, or control. Notwithstanding this prohibition, a brewer licensed under subdivision 6, clause (d), may be an affiliate or subsidiary company of a brewer licensed in Minnesota or elsewhere if that brewer's only manufacture of malt liquor is:

(i) manufacture licensed under subdivision 6, clause (d);

(ii) manufacture in another state for consumption exclusively in a restaurant located in the place of manufacture; or

(iii) manufacture in another state for consumption primarily in a restaurant located in or immediately adjacent to the place of manufacture if the brewer was licensed under subdivision 6, clause (d), on January 1, 1995.

(c) Except as provided in subdivision 7a, no brewer as defined in subdivision 7a or importer may have any interest, in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, in the license, business, assets, or corporate stock of a licensed malt liquor wholesaler.

Subd. 7a. Permitted interests in wholesale business. (a) A brewer may financially assist a wholesaler of malt liquor through participation in a limited partnership in which the brewer is the limited partner and the wholesaler is the general partner. A limited partnership authorized in this paragraph may not exist for more than ten years from the date of its creation, and may not, directly or indirectly, be recreated, renewed, or extended beyond that date.

(b) A brewer may financially assist a malt liquor wholesaler and collateralize the financing by taking a security interest in the inventory and assets, other than the corporate stock, of the wholesaler. A financial agreement authorized by this paragraph may not be in effect for more than ten years from the date of its creation and may not be directly or indirectly extended or renewed.

(c) A brewer who, after creation of a financial agreement authorized by paragraph (b), or after creation of a limited partnership authorized in paragraph (a), acquires legal or equitable title to the wholesaler's business which was the subject of the agreement or limited partnership, or to the business assets, must divest the business or its assets within two years of the date of acquiring them. A malt liquor wholesaler whose business or assets are acquired by a brewer as described in

this paragraph may not enter into another such financial agreement, or participate in another such limited partnership, for 20 years from the date of the acquisition of the business or assets.

(d) A brewer may have an interest in the business, assets, or corporate stock of a malt liquor wholesaler as a result of (1) a judgment against the wholesaler arising out of a default by the wholesaler or (2) acquisition of title to the business, assets, or corporate stock as a result of a written request of the wholesaler. A brewer may maintain ownership of or an interest in the business, assets, or corporate stock under this paragraph for not more than two years and only for the purpose of facilitating an orderly transfer of the business to an owner not affiliated with the brewer.

(e) A brewer may continue to maintain an ownership interest in a malt liquor wholesaler if it owned the interest on January 1, 1991.

(f) A brewer that was legally selling the brewer's own products at wholesale in Minnesota on January 1, 1991, may continue to sell those products at wholesale in the area where it was selling those products on that date.

(g) A brewer that manufactures no more than 20,000 barrels of malt liquor or its metric equivalent in a calendar year may own or have an interest in a malt liquor wholesaler that sells only the brewer's products, provided that a brewer that manufactures between 20,000 and 25,000 barrels in any calendar year shall be permitted to continue to own or have an interest in a malt liquor wholesaler that sells only the brewer's products if: (1) that malt liquor wholesaler distributes no more than 20,000 barrels per calendar year; and (2) the brewer has not manufactured 25,000 barrels in any calendar year. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a brewer that manufactured between 20,000 and 25,000 barrels in 2012 shall be permitted to continue to own or have an interest in a malt liquor wholesaler that sells only the brewer's products until that brewer manufactures 25,000 barrels in a calendar year.

(h) When the commissioner issues a license to a malt liquor wholesaler described in paragraph (a) or (b), the commissioner may issue the license only to the entity which is actually operating the wholesale business and may not issue the license to a brewer that is a limited partner under paragraph (a) or providing financial assistance under paragraph (b) unless the brewer has acquired a wholesaler's business or assets under paragraph (c) or (d).

(i) For purposes of this subdivision and subdivision 7, clause (c), "brewer" means:

- (1) a holder of a license to manufacture malt liquor;
- (2) an officer, director, agent, or employee of such a license holder; and
- (3) an affiliate of such a license holder, regardless of whether the affiliation is corporate or by management, direction, or control.

Subd. 8. Sales without license. A licensed brewer may without an additional license sell malt liquor to employees or retired former employees, in amounts of not more than 768 fluid ounces in a week for off-premise consumption only. A collector of commemorative bottles, those terms are as defined in section 297G.01, subdivisions 4 and 5, may sell them to another collector without a license. It is also lawful for a collector of beer cans to sell unopened cans of a brand which has not been sold commercially for at least two years to another collector without obtaining a license. The amount sold to any one collector in any one month shall not exceed 768 fluid ounces. A licensed manufacturer of wine containing not more than 25 percent alcohol by volume nor less than 51 percent wine made from Minnesota-grown agricultural products may sell at on-sale or off-sale wine made on the licensed premises without a further license.

Subd. 9. **Unlicensed manufacture.** Nothing in this chapter requires a license for the natural fermentation of fruit juices or brewing of beer in the home for family use.

Subd. 10. [Repealed, 1995 c 198 s 17]

History: 1985 c 305 art 5 s 1; 1985 c 308 s 1; 1Sp1985 c 16 art 2 s 3 subd 1; 1986 c 330 s 4; 1987 c 152 art 1 s 1; 1987 c 249 s 1,2; 1990 c 554 s 4-6; 1991 c 249 s 1,31; 1992 c 513 art 3 s 53; 1993 c 350 s 7; 1994 c 611 s 7-9; 1995 c 198 s 4,5; 1996 c 418 s 1; 1997 c 179 art 2 s 2; 2002 c 321 s 5; 2003 c 126 s 2,3; 1Sp2003 c 2 art 4 s 23; 2005 c 25 s 1,2; 2005 c 131 s 1,2; 2005 c 136 art 8 s 12; 2006 c 210 s 3; 2007 c 89 s 3; 2009 c 120 s 2; 2011 c 55 s 3-5; 2013 c 42 s 1-5; 2013 c 82 s 34