

LIQUOR PRIMARY VS LIQUOR PRIMARY CLUB FAQ

1. WHAT IS A LIQUOR PRIMARY LICENCE?

Liquor Primary is a licence class administered by the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) that allows an establishment that is not predominantly frequented by minors to sell and serve liquor. Liquor Primary establishments may be **bars, nightclubs, hotels, stadiums**, or other business types. Liquor Primary establishments must offer food and non-alcoholic beverages to patrons, but they are not expected to offer the same level of food service that a Food Primary licenced establishment would.

[Learn more here](#)

2. WHAT IS A CLUB LICENCE?

A Liquor Primary Club licence is a **subclass** of a Liquor Primary licence for business types typically focused on recreation, athletics, social clubs, etc. When applying for a liquor licence, the licensee can choose to apply specifically for a Liquor Primary Club licence or a basic Liquor Primary licence.

Eligibility for a club licence requires **minimum 50 members** and either:

- A corporation that doesn't have share capital (e.g. a society) and doesn't operate for the financial gain of members, or
- A chartered branch or unit of this type of corporation (e.g. a branch of the Royal Canadian Legion)

Liquor Primary Clubs are required to maintain a **daily register** to record the names and addresses of guests and their member hosts. Clubs must **restrict liquor sales and service to members** and guests accompanied by members.

[Learn more here](#)

3. CAN A FOOD PRIMARY LICENCE HAVE A CLUB LICENCE?

No, a Food Primary licence (i.e. a restaurant) cannot have a club licence.

4. WHAT SPECIAL PRIVILEGES COME WITH A LIQUOR PRIMARY CLUB LICENCE?

- Clubs can offer **locker privileges** to members. Members can store personal liquor, if purchased from the club, in their locker.
- Clubs can offer their members liquor **self-service**.
- **Green-lined areas** allow unique flexibility for temporarily de-licensing some or all licensed areas without applying to the LCRB. Green-lined areas do not need to be de-licenced for catered events.
- **Minors** are permitted in service areas for meal service and award ceremonies during certain banquets or award events. Minors must be competitors in the associated event and accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- Members can **move their own** (opened or unopened) liquor between service areas in the establishment.
- Clubs can, if specified in the Terms & Conditions on the face of their licence, allow members and their guests to **consume liquor outside of service areas** during events. Note that this privilege is not permitted for new club licence applications.

[Learn more here](#)



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5. WHAT ARE THE RESTRICTIONS FOR A LIQUOR PRIMARY CLUB LICENCE?

In addition to the restrictions for any Liquor Primary licence, clubs are not permitted to:

- **Advertise** to the public,
- Hold **dual licences**,
- Sell or serve liquor to anyone who is not a member or guest accompanied by a member,
- Hold a **catering** endorsement, or
- Permit anyone other than employees, members, or registered guests into the establishment.

[Learn more here](#)

6. WHAT ARE THE RESTRICTIONS FOR A LIQUOR PRIMARY CLUB LICENCE?

A club may use a **green-lined area** to host a **liquor-free** public event without notifying the LCRB, unless the event ends after 8:00 pm.

A third-party [Special Event Permit](#) holder may host an event for non-members at a club.

7. HOW DO I GET A LIQUOR PRIMARY CLUB LICENCE?

You can **apply to the LCRB** for a club licence the same way you apply for any liquor licence.

Applications can be expensive. You will need to pay a **\$2200 application fee**, a **\$2200 first-year fee**, and several other variable fees like **city licensing, floor plans**, and others. Each variable fee could cost as much as \$5000. **Annual renewal fees** are based on liquor sales.

Applications take a long time, often as long as a year, and require local government or First Nations consultation.

8. CAN A LIQUOR PRIMARY CLUB TRANSITION TO A BASIC LIQUOR PRIMARY LICENCE?

Yes, you are allowed to transition your club licence to a basic Liquor Primary licence. This requires submitting a new licence application to the LCRB, which can be expensive and should be considered carefully. See above for more information.

Transitioning to a Liquor Primary licence is a permanent change, and you will lose all club privileges. You may also lose specific endorsements on your Terms & Conditions, like off-sales.

We recommend you connect with a **liquor licensing consultant** before applying for any kind of liquor licence. Each business will have unique considerations, fees, and timelines that a consultant can help you fully understand before taking on the financial risk of changing your licence type.

9. WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT LIQUOR PRIMARY CLUB LICENCES?

The [ABLE BC](#) team is here to help! Reach out to us anytime if you have questions that are not answered here.

[Contact us!](#)

The LCRB website has a wealth of information for licensees. We recommend you refer to:

- [Liquor Primary Terms & Conditions handbook and Liquor Policy Manual](#)
- [Liquor Policy Bulletins](#)
- [Liquor legislation and regulations](#)

You can also consult a liquor licensing consultant. ABLE BC has several consultant recommendations in our annual [Buyers' Guide](#).