

## Alcohol Container Registration

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. What is the BCMB?

The Beverage Container Management Board (BCMB) has a delegated authority from the Government of Alberta to oversee the beverage container recycling industry in Alberta. Its mandate is to regulate and enhance a leading beverage container system that protects Alberta's environment.

#### 2. Why do beverage containers need to be registered?

Provincial regulation requires that all beverage containers (including alcohol, non-alcohol and cannabis beverages) sold in Alberta be registered with the BCMB. Only beverage containers that have been approved by the BCMB can be sold in the province. All beverage containers are collected through Alberta's province-wide depot network, necessitating a streamlined approach to container registration.

Through the registration process, the BCMB determines if a beverage container can be recycled in a manner that supports efficient and effective recycling (e.g. recycling method, the amount of recoverable materials, prevention of contamination in the recycling system, etc.). Registration also ensures a customer refund when the container is returned to an Alberta depot.

#### 3. How does Alberta's beverage container registration process compare to that in other provinces?

While each province/territory has a unique beverage container management approach, recycling programs in Alberta and across Canada are transitioning towards Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) — a policy approach that shifts the physical and financial burden of collecting, sorting, processing, and recycling waste to the producer and away from local governments and the public.

Although Alberta's new EPR legislation does not yet extend to beverage containers, container registration is a key component of the EPR approach. It enhances consumer accessibility, encourages higher recycling rates, and supports well-coordinated beverage container management.

#### 4. What are the recycling standards that must be met for containers to be recycled?

To determine if a beverage container is recyclable, click [here](#) for more information and for the BCMB Approved Materials List.

## 5. What has changed for liquor agencies related to container registration?

Previously, liquor agencies registered products with Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) on behalf of the alcohol manufacturers/product owners that they represent in Alberta. AGLC then registered the containers with the BCMB on behalf of the liquor agencies. As of February 22, 2024, AGLC no longer registers alcohol **containers** with the BCMB on behalf of liquor agencies. **Liquor agencies are required to register new containers directly with the BCMB through its registration portal.**

*\*The exception to the new process is the registration of containers exempt from the recycling system (e.g., kegs managed through a separate deposit program; wooden casks/barrels). Information for these containers is still to be provided to AGLC. A complete list of BCMB-exempt containers will be posted on the Liquor Agency Portal at the time the new container registration process is implemented.*

## 6. With the switch to the BCMB managing the registration of alcohol containers, what role will AGLC have related to the sale of alcohol products in Alberta?

AGLC maintains responsibility for registering all alcohol **products** in Alberta. Liquor agencies are required to register their containers with BCMB first and then continue to register their **products** with AGLC afterwards.

## 7. Why has a new registration system and process been implemented for alcohol container registrations?

This change streamlines the alcohol container registration process and ensures **all** beverage manufacturers (including alcohol, non-alcohol and cannabis beverages) follow the same process and meet provincial requirements for container registration.

The change also supports more timely and accurate processing and information exchange. Providing container information directly to the BCMB allows the organization to evaluate the container material and approve its use. It allows liquor agencies to confirm a container's eligibility in Alberta with the BCMB and ask questions about unique and novel containers.

## 8. Why do containers and products need to be registered separately with the two organizations?

Registering containers and products separately aligns the processes more closely with each organization's mandate (the BCMB is responsible for the containers and AGLC is responsible for alcohol products).

Liquor agencies register **containers** with the BCMB directly while still registering the **alcohol/product** separately with AGLC. The alcohol/product registration is finalized by AGLC after receiving the BCMB's container registration approval.

**9. Does this mean liquor agencies have to re-register all their current containers/products in the BCMB's new system?**

No. All existing registration information has been transitioned from AGLC to the BCMB's new registration system and linked with the liquor agent account (registrant account) in the BCMB's database. There is no need for liquor agencies to re-enter existing account information or container registrations that were completed on their behalf by AGLC. If agencies wish to add images or correct information on registrations done prior to the transition, they can reach out to the BCMB for help doing so by sending an email to [registrations@bcmb.ab.ca](mailto:registrations@bcmb.ab.ca).

**10. How does a liquor agent access BCMB's portal?**

Liquor agencies received an email to the primary contact on file with AGLC on the transition date (February 22, 2024) with instructions on how to confirm your account and container information. BCMB registrations officers will work with liquor agencies to update any incomplete registrant accounts and container registrations (e.g., missing contact info, missing UPCs, etc.). If you have not received this email, or you feel it may have gone to an out-of-date contact, please reach out to the BCMB for assistance.

**11. Will there be delays for liquor agencies by having to register the containers with the BCMB and the products with AGLC?**

While there is a two-part process for registrations (container and product), the BCMB's new online registration system (known as SIMS) is simple and efficient to use. The process is straightforward and requires the liquor agencies to be familiar with the system and have all the necessary information for registering containers available in advance.

The new container registration system provides efficiencies in the registration process and the ability for AGLC and BCMB to share product/container data. BCMB will issue a registration number to the applicant as soon as the container registration is submitted in the BCMB portal which is used in both systems for easy tracking/management. BCMB registrations are reviewed within a 2 business day timeline.

**12. Will the BCMB's alcohol container registration process result in any additional fees for liquor agencies?**

No, there will be no additional fees for liquor agencies as a result of the new registration process. The existing one-time fee of \$60 for a manufacturer to register with the BCMB is waived for liquor agencies, and the BCMB no longer charges a fee for each new container registration submission.

Additionally, liquor agencies continue to be represented by AGLC, the deemed manufacturer for alcohol products in Alberta, so there is no change to the reporting and remittance requirements for alcohol containers and therefore no requirement for an initial remittance deposit to the Collection System Agent (ABCRC) for existing and new liquor agencies.

### **13. When do liquor agencies have to start using the new system?**

The transition to liquor agency container self-registration began February 22, 2024.

### **14. What kind of information needs to be provided to register an alcohol container?**

The information required to register an alcohol container includes the following (which must be printed on the container in English):

- Brand (Supplier)
- Flavour (Product Long Name)
- Size (metric)
- Container material
- UPC/UCC-13 (if applicable) - While UPCs/UCC-13s (barcodes) are not currently mandated for beverage containers, the BCMB strongly recommends manufacturers (or liquor agencies on their behalf) ensure their containers have one. The beverage container recycling system relies on barcodes for confirmation of registration and material sorting at depots. Barcodes will make the registration process more efficient, as liquor agencies will be required to contact the BCMB directly to register any container without a barcode.
- Images – detailed image requirements can be found in the BCMB’s [Image Requirements Guide](#)

Detailed information on the BCMB’s registration requirements can be found on their website. [Click here.](#)

### **15. How does a liquor agent register a container that will not have a UPC affixed to it?**

Currently, when a container has no UPC, the liquor agent is required to send all container information to the BCMB to have the registration done on their behalf by the registrations team. The email must include the product name, flavour, container size, container material, and images. In the future we may explore options for self-registration of no UPC containers.

### **16. How does a liquor agent register multipacks or mixed packs with the BCMB?**

The BCMB only registers individual containers. In a multipack, one registration would be needed for the individual container within. In a mixed pack, a different BCMB registration would be required for each container that has a different name, UPC, container material, or container size.

### **17. If a container has the same UPC, material, size, product and only a slight change is being made to the label, is a new BCMB registration required?**

These scenarios are handled on a case-by-case basis, please reach out to the BCMB registrations team to confirm.

**18. Liquor agencies have not previously been required to provide images of their product/container. Why is that now necessary and will it make the registration process more involved?**

Container images are essential for the BCMB to review containers and verify container information. Images can be taken on a phone or any other device and easily uploaded in the registration system.

Front and back images of the entire container and all components (labels, lids, attachments) are required, displaying the product name, flavour, container size, container material and UPC/UCC-13. If there is no UPC/UCC-13, an image of the back of the container must still be provided. The UPC/UCC-13 must be the one on the container itself, not on any external packaging.

**Additional image for plastic containers:** If the beverage container is made of plastic, an additional image of the recycling symbol and resin (material) identifier (usually molded into the container on the bottom or side bottom) must be uploaded as well.

**19. Will the BCMB accept a rendering of the alcohol container instead of an actual image?**

The BCMB requires actual container images as they are used to confirm the submitted information for the container (i.e. UPC, brand, size, material, etc.). If a rendering is the only available image, in order to avoid holding up the process, the BCMB may approve the registration with the understanding that the actual container image will be sent as soon as one is available.

**20. Is the process change just for alcohol products going through AGLC's central liquor warehouse (operated by Connect Logistics)?**

No. The new registration process is for all alcohol beverage containers. Alberta manufacturers that register their products with AGLC for self-distribution and/or for distribution via the central warehouse will use the new process.

**21. How does the BCMB process impact the liquor agents who archive/deactivate products with AGLC and reactivate them at a later date?**

If reactivating with AGLC, the liquor agent can use the same BCMB Registration Number. Any changes to the container such as the container material, container size, product name or UPC will require a new container registration and a new BCMB Registration Number.

**22. Where can alcohol manufacturers get a UPC/UCC-13 (barcode) if they don't have one for their product?**

In Canada, manufacturers can contact GS1 Canada at (416) 510-8039 or 1-800-567-7084 to purchase a company prefix. With that number, your company can assign bar codes for its products. You can visit GS1 Canada's website at [www.gs1ca.org](http://www.gs1ca.org) or email them at

[info@gs1ca.org](mailto:info@gs1ca.org). Manufacturers outside of Canada should contact their national GS1 affiliate ([www.gs1.org](http://www.gs1.org)).

### **23. Will training be provided for the new process/system?**

To ensure the information is easily available and accessible for liquor agencies at any time, AGLC and the BCMB have developed a brief video on the change and why it is taking place. This video contains information similar to that in the FAQs and the fact sheets already provided and is found on the BCMB [website](#).

On the BCMB's website you can also find a portal user guide and a series of step-by-step instructional videos on:

1. How to access your account for the first time.
2. How to create an account.
3. How to register a container.

The BCMB will work closely with liquor agencies to support you in every way possible as you register new containers.

### **24. Does the process/system change if I'm a non-alcohol manufacturer who has always registered my containers directly with the BCMB?**

Non-alcohol registrations and alcohol registrations are treated differently in the BCMB portal and an account must exist for both. The same email address cannot be used in more than one account. If you are a liquor agent who also sells non-alcohol products and do not currently have a non-alcohol account with the BCMB, please reach out to the registrations team for assistance.

### **25. Who do we contact if we have questions or concerns?**

The BCMB will work closely with liquor agencies to provide support in every way possible with this process change.

Questions or concerns related to beverage **container registration** should be directed to the BCMB at: [registrations@bcmb.ab.ca](mailto:registrations@bcmb.ab.ca)

Questions or concerns related to **alcohol/product registration** should be directed to AGLC at: [product@aglc.ca](mailto:product@aglc.ca)