

Self-pour alcohol systems – code of practice

17 February 2023

Introduction

Liquor & Gaming NSW (L&GNSW) has a principles-led and engagement focused approach to venues that use self-pour alcohol dispensing systems.

Under the NSW liquor laws, all licensees must have due regard to the need to:

- minimise alcohol-related harm, and
- encourage responsible attitudes and practices towards the promotion, sale, supply, service and consumption of liquor.

In line with this, there are offences for licensees that permit intoxication on their premises or sell or supply liquor to minors.

If you are using a self-pour system at your venue, you must ensure it is operated in a way that is consistent with your responsible service of alcohol (RSA) obligations. This code of practice is intended to help you understand how self-pour systems can be used, while meeting your obligations under the liquor laws.

This code of practice applies to venues that operates a self-serve tap or taps, as part of a self-pour alcohol system. It is a condition of the licence that the licensee complies with the code.

What is a self-pour alcohol system?

A self-pour alcohol system allows patrons to walk up and pour their own alcoholic drinks from any of the available taps. However, while this may provide convenience for patrons, it may also increase the risks around RSA and compliance with the liquor laws if it is not well managed.

How can I ensure my venue is compliant with the liquor laws if I use a self-pour system?

To ensure you are meeting your RSA obligations L&GNSW considers that you need to have the following controls in place at a minimum:

- ▲ **Monitored access card or token:** For a patron to use your self-pour system, you need to control and monitor access to the system by issuing a single access card or token (e.g. a wristband with RFID token), and actively monitor the dispensing system. As you are selling liquor by issuing or topping up the card or token, it must be issued or topped up by RSA-trained bar staff. To assist with monitoring use, patrons should not be allowed to access multiple cards or tokens. They should not be allowed to provide cards or tokens to other patrons (especially minors).
- ▲ **Volume limit:** You must ensure you apply reasonable limits that restrict the volume of alcohol that can be dispensed by a patron using the access card or token, before a credit top-up or reactivation of the card or token is required. Reasonable limits include:
 - up to one jug of beer, cider or mixed spirits that has up to 6 per cent alcohol by volume (ABV) (1140ml); or
 - up to two glasses of wine (300ml); or
 - up to three standard drinks (based on ABV, not liquid volume).
- ▲ **Automatic lock of access card or token:** The access card or token must automatically lock when the volume limit is reached or after no longer than six hours – whichever comes first.

To top-up or reactivate the card or token, you need to ensure patrons have to present again to RSA-trained bar staff. This ensures they can check for signs of intoxication.

- ▲ **RSA marshals at peak times:** During peak trading times, weekends and major events when self-pour systems are operating, you should have at least one dedicated RSA marshal to actively monitor the use of the system to ensure it is being used consistent with RSA obligations*.
- ▲ **Monitoring minors on the premises:** If minors are allowed on your premises, staff must monitor for secondary supply. Additional duties undertaken by the RSA marshal will include age checks of any patron using an access card or token at the self-pour system that looks under 25 years of age.
- ▲ **Point of sale signage:** You need to display all the usual point of sale bar signage at the self-pour system so it can be viewed by the patrons using it.
- ▲ **No irresponsible liquor promotions:** Consistent with [NSW Liquor Promotion Guidelines](#), you must not conduct any self-service promotions that could encourage risky drinking using the self-pour system – for example free drinks or heavily discounted drinks.
- ▲ **Location of system:** The system must be conspicuously located to allow for appropriate monitoring by staff.

** Under the Liquor Regulation 2018 there is no restriction on RSA marshals undertaking additional duties. These duties, for example, could include guiding the customer through the self-pour experience, replenishing glassware and checking in new guests (e.g. issuing access cards/tokens). However it remains the responsibility of the licensee to ensure any additional duties do not prevent the RSA Marshal from undertaking their RSA Supervisory duties.*

Depending on the size, type and risk profile of your premises, you may also want to consider implementing additional measures beyond those detailed above, including restricting the use of self-pour systems at high risk times (e.g. after midnight).

The licensee has a responsibility at all times to supervise the supply and consumption of alcohol to ensure patrons are not intoxicated on the premises.

If you operate a large capacity venue such as a sports stadium, you are encouraged to engage with L&GNSW to discuss any proposal to use a self-pour system before installing it at your venue. You can contact us by emailing:

compliance.info@liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au

What happens if you do not comply with this code of practice?

This code of practice is issued under clause 87 of the Liquor Regulation 2018, and it is a condition of your licence that you comply with it. Under section 11(2) of the *Liquor Act 2007*, breaching licence conditions can result in fines of up to \$11,000, 12 months in prison, or both.

If you do not comply with this code of practice, L&GNSW inspectors or the Police may issue a formal warning to notify you that your practices are considered to be non-compliant with your RSA obligations. The warning may refer you back to this code of practice and seek corrective action. Failure to rectify any issues identified by L&GNSW or Police may result in an escalated enforcement approach.

Any serious breaches of the NSW liquor laws resulting from the use of a self-pour system, such as the sale of liquor to minors or permitting intoxication on the premises, can also result in significant penalties or disciplinary action. Demerit points may be incurred under the Demerit Point Scheme in Part 9A of the *Liquor Act 2007*.

For further information

To find out more about the liquor laws, contact L&GNSW:

🌐 <https://www.liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au>

@ [Contact us online](#)

📞 1300 024 720

You can also access the liquor laws at legislation.nsw.gov.au