

Jim Shpall

Applejack Wine & Spirits

4/7/23 Comment

Topic: Off-premise tastings

I was asked, or volunteered, to provide some points relating to changes to the existing law and regulations relating to off-premise tastings. The points are to be discussed at the marketplace subgroup meeting on April 20, 2023:

1. Allow any and all interested parties -- manufacturers, wholesalers and/or retailers -- to pay for the product being tasted and related costs associated with the tasting.
2. All containers opened for a tasting must be removed or otherwise separated from items on the sales floor. However, if a container is opened for the tasting and product remains in the container, employees may be tasted on the product(s) for educational purposes.
3. Allow up to twenty products (or even more since a limit is arbitrary) to be available for tasting. In some states, retailers have systems for the dispensing of wines and spirits to allow customers to taste a sample size of a product to determine if the consumer wants to purchase that particular product. Such a tasting acts as an effective sales tool.
4. Proper identification must be provided by the customer to ensure that all individuals tasted are 21 years of age or older. No one who is visibly intoxicated may participate in the tasting.
5. Expand the daily time frame in which tastings can be conducted. I would suggest that the time frame and times be left to the retailer. If a customer walks into the store to buy wine at 9:00 AM but wants to taste it before she buys it, that should be allowed.