



Social Responsibility Product Listing Guidelines

This information provides liquor agents with some of the factors in Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries' (MBLL) decision process on whether to list a product. In addition to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) requirements, MBLL's social reference pricing requirements, and performance measurements, products are reviewed for social responsibility and corporate reputation concerns as part of our listing process.

Products are reviewed prior to listing, or when labels and/or packaging are updated.

Producers must ensure their product label and/or packaging meets CFIA requirements prior to applying for listing. Some main CFIA requirements include specifications related to ingredients, French language requirements, and indication of alcohol by volume (ABV).

We want to work collaboratively with you regarding the social responsibility and corporate reputation elements of your product to help prevent unnecessary costs when a product's name, branding, or packaging has customer safety or reputation concerns. The following considerations are important for you to think about as you develop new products or seek to list a product with us.

Social Responsibility/Corporate Reputation Concerns:

Minors

- Uses imagery portraying minors or persons who may reasonably be mistaken for minors.
- Appeals to minors (e.g., child-oriented cartoon characters like Santa or a school bus).
- Is connected to groups, businesses, or activities associated with minors (e.g., MJHL and other under-18 teams).

Alcohol content

- Emphasizes high alcohol content as a selling feature.
- Depicts alcohol as a necessity or requirement for relaxation.
- Suggests health, therapeutic or sedative benefits.
- Resembles non-alcoholic beverages or food, unless the label clearly and prominently indicates the product contains alcohol.
- Has an ABV greater than 80%.

Attainment of Status

- Suggests that drinking can enhance personal qualities, improve self-image or self-esteem.
- Suggests drinking as a way to gain control, admiration, or social or financial success.
- Implies inferiority or unpopularity for not consuming.

Safety

- Promotes or depicts intoxication, decreased inhibitions, or irresponsible or illegal behaviour.
- Refers to consumption at generally inappropriate times (e.g., breakfast) or places it is prohibited in Manitoba (e.g., public park, beach, or tailgate party).

- Links consumption with operation of a motor vehicle (e.g., while boating)

Tastefulness & Sensitivities

- Refers to addiction or dependency in a positive or light-hearted manner.
- Offends political, cultural or religious sensitivities.
- Degrades or depicts in a disrespectful way the image or status of any individual or group in society, past or present.
- Is shaped as items associated with dangerous behaviour (e.g., hypodermic needles, weapons).
- Contains overt sexual activity, sexually lewd or indecent images, or indecent language – explicit or implicit (such as through acronyms).

Q&A

1. When does a review happen?

Products are reviewed when an application for listing is made, when a product is updated significantly, or when we receive concerns from consumers or others.

2. What can I do to avoid having a product declined for listing?

We strongly encourage any company wishing to list a new or significantly updated product in Manitoba to contact the category manager before investing in labels or marketing materials destined for our market. We are not responsible for costs related to product that we decline to carry.

3. What do you mean by “corporate reputation”?

Corporate reputation refers to the maintenance, among our stakeholders, of trust and positive perceptions of our corporation and its employees, our integrity and our corporate values.

4. What do you mean by “social responsibility”?

Social responsibility refers to the messages that the product communicates to the consumer and public that might contribute to unhealthy, harmful or dangerous outcomes.

5. What do you look at when reviewing a product?

We look at brand and product names, tasting notes, all text and images on labels, packaging design and associated advertising.

6. What does the review process look like?

Generally this process is invisible to the listing agent – it requires no additional documentation or submissions. Our Category Management team reviews each product before it is listed. If a possible concern is identified, it is escalated internally for further review.

7. How long does the process take if a product is flagged for review?

While each case is unique, we try to review products as expediently as possible.

8. If a product is declined for listing, due to social responsibility or corporate reputation concerns, does that mean it cannot be sold anywhere in Manitoba?

Depending on the level of risk, the product may not be approved for listing in Liquor Marts, in privately operated stores, or in both.

9. What happens if a product is declined for listing?

We will contact the listing agent and explain the reason for our decision. While the decision is final,

we will provide feedback on changes that may improve the product's chances of being accepted for listing in the future.

A product may be resubmitted for consideration only after the product is modified to address the issue. The product will then undergo a new review.