

Fermented and brewed soft drinks

FACT SHEET

Fermented and brewed soft drink products are a popular alternative to alcoholic beverages. Some of these drinks have been found to contain low levels of alcohol. The unknown consumption of undeclared alcohol may be harmful to consumers and is potentially misleading. States and territories have different thresholds of what constitutes an alcoholic beverage. This fact sheet provides information regarding the Tasmanian regulatory environment and related advice for manufacturers and retailers of these products.

Tasmanian legislation and regulation

In Tasmania, the *Liquor Licensing Act 1990* defines liquor in beverage form to have an alcoholic content greater than 0.5 percent alcohol by volume. The sale of such products requires a liquor licence, and the unlicensed selling of liquor except as authorised, is an offence.

The Commissioner for Licensing has responsibility for issuing liquor licences in Tasmania. The Liquor and Gaming Branch provides administrative support to the Commissioner. The Branch can provide information about licence options should you require a liquor licence to sell fermented and brewed drinks.

Fermented and brewed soft drinks

In Australia, the most common fermented and brewed soft drinks products are Kombucha, Kefir and Ginger Beer. These beverages generally contain a base (such as tea, water or coconut milk), sugar, flavours and a starter culture (comprised of microorganisms, including yeast and bacteria).

Alcohol content

Alcohol may be produced during the fermentation or brewing processes for these types of beverages. Fermented and brewed products undergo a primary fermentation step, traditionally followed by a secondary fermentation processes occurring after bottling. Alcohol may be produced at both fermentation stages.

Factors found to influence the alcohol content of fermented and brewed soft drinks include:

- the stage of the product's shelf life;
- the process of effervescence development used; and
- the addition of inclusions and flavours.

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Manufacturer and retailer considerations

- Both manufacturers and retailers of fermented beverages must be aware of the regulatory requirements and public health risks associated with the presence of alcohol.
- Manufacturers must know the level of alcohol contained in their products, and comply with all relevant legislation and standards from production through to retail.
- Retailers should consider:
 - purchasing products from reputable suppliers;
 - consulting with manufacturers regarding product information (for example, request a copy of the completed alcohol testing records or certificate of analysis);
 - ensuring products are cold when delivered and are stored in the refrigerator;
 - discarding brewed soft drinks if suspected they have not been stored correctly; and
 - the sale of products prior to best before dates.

Additional information

- [Producing and Selling Fermented Drinks in Tasmania fact sheet](#) (Tasmanian Public Health Services).
- The [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code](#) sets out the definition of brewed drinks and standards associated with labelling alcoholic beverages.
- Further information regarding liquor licences is available from the [Liquor and Gaming website](#) or by contacting the Liquor and Gaming Branch on (03) 6166 4040 or licensing@treasury.tas.gov.au.

For further information contact the Liquor and Gaming Branch

Phone: (03) 6166 4040

Email: licensing@treasury.tas.gov.au

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