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SOLICITORS



What if...

I want to start selling alcohol as part of my business

Last month, we explored what can happen if a business falls short of its health and safety responsibilities. This month, we take a look at what you need to do if you want to sell alcohol as part of your business.



Simon Crack

First and foremost, if you want to sell alcohol in the UK you need to make sure that you are properly licensed. This is vitally important, as the penalties your business can face for serving alcohol without the appropriate licence can be severe – and may even result in your imprisonment.

If your business is a pub, restaurant, café or similar and would like to sell alcohol, you will need to apply for a Premises Licence. You will also need to appoint a relevant person as a ‘designated premises supervisor’ – this person will need to have a Personal Licence, too. It will be this person’s responsibility to ‘authorise’ any other employees within your business to sell alcohol.

When you apply for a Premises Licence you will indicate which days and hours you would like your premises to be ‘licenced’ to sell alcohol. The local council will then look at your application and the hours requested. They will consider if any conditions need to be imposed, for example, to avoid any nuisance or health and safety issues. If you sell the business or restructure it at a later date you may need to apply for the licence to be transferred.

It doesn’t just stop at obtaining the licences, either. You will also need to consider planning permission, lease restrictions and issues such as whether you are allowed to play music.

You need to check that your lease does not restrict the sale of alcohol on the premises and that you have the appropriate planning permission to allow you to do what you want to do.

If your business wants to sell alcohol as a ‘one-off’ without a licence, such as when organising a single event, you might be able to apply for a Temporary Event Notice to cover a ‘small scale’ event. However, under most circumstances, a full Premises Licence will still be required, so it is important to seek specialist advice first, as the rules governing exemptions can be difficult to navigate.

Selling alcohol as part of your business is more complicated than you might think, which is why it makes sense to find someone who can guide you through the process from the outset.

For further information or advice, please call our Business Support team on **01904 528200** and speak to **David Scott**.

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