

BRIEFING DOCUMENT FOR STAFF: CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE DISPLAY AND SALE OF ALCOHOL PRODUCTS IN MIXED TRADING PREMISES

IN-STORE BRIEFING DOCUMENT

This briefing document is intended to help with the initial briefing of in-store staff on the Voluntary Code of Practice which has been agreed by the mixed trading sector. It seeks to give an explanation of the key features of the Code which is to be displayed in participating stores and the Explanatory Guidelines which are part of the agreement, but it does not replace these documents.

WHAT IS THE CODE

The basic principle underpinning this Code of Practice is that alcohol is not an ordinary household product despite being sold in many supermarkets, convenience stores and petrol stations. As a result, the Irish retail industry have drawn up this Voluntary Code on the responsible retailing of alcohol products and have committed to the Minister and Department of Justice and Equality, and the Minister and Department of Health, that it be implemented in full by all participants. The Code went live on December 1st 2008.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE CODE

The Code covers eight main areas. Understanding of and commitment to these principles are essential for all store employees involved in the display and sale of alcohol.

1. DISPLAY OF THE CODE

The Code must be displayed in A3 format in every participating store. It must be displayed in a place and in a manner that make it easily accessible, visible and legible to the customer. It must be displayed in or near the off-licence section of the store, or at or near the entrance to the store, and the customer's view of the Code must not be unduly obstructed or impeded. Two copies of the Code are to be displayed in larger stores/supermarkets.

The display-copy of the Code represents the commitment of the licence holder to implement the standards of the Code and abide by its provisions. It alerts customers to the standards which they are entitled to expect. We have provided space on each display-copy of the Code for each store to insert the name and address of the licence holder. It is essential that this is correctly filled in, especially in the event of a customer complaint. In addition, the address and website details of the RRAI are preprinted on each display-copy of the Code.

2. DISPLAY OF ALCOHOL

Where possible, the display of alcohol products should be in an area of the store that customers do not have to pass through in order to gain access to other beverages and food products. Ideally, alcohol products should be positioned at the rear of the premises. Exceptions may be made for security reasons where such products are displayed behind a counter, but not in a window. As far as possible, alcohol products need to be separate from other beverages and food products.

3. ADVERTISING

In-store advertising of alcohol products should be confined to the area in which alcohol products are displayed. It should not be placed in windows or at internal locations where it is intended to be seen from outside the store. Advertising (point of sale) materials produced by retailers must not:

- Be aimed at minors;
- Seek to glamorise the consumption of alcohol;
- Encourage the excessive consumption of alcohol.

4. SALE OF ALCOHOL

The sale of alcohol products is permitted only between 10.30am and 10.00pm on weekdays and Saturdays, and between 12.30pm and 10.00pm on any Sunday or St. Patrick's Day (sales are not permitted on Christmas Day and Good Friday).

Alcohol products will be sold only at clearly designated check-out points by persons over the age of 18 years. Check-out points at which alcohol products are sold, or alternatively the display area, will be monitored by CCTV. The sale of alcohol products by unsupervised self-service means is not permitted. The sale of alcohol products on a "pay-on-delivery" basis is not permitted.

5. PROOF OF AGE

Production of a proof-of-age document must be demanded in all cases where the customer appears to be under the age of 21 years or otherwise where there may be a doubt about his or her age. The Garda Age Card is the preferred proof-of-age document.

6. STAFF TRAINING

Store Managers and/or Licence Holders will ensure adequate training of staff members engaged in the display and sale of alcohol products and, in particular, will ensure that such staff members have an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant areas of licensing law and of the Voluntary Code of Practice.

7. INDEPENDENT AUDIT

A national independent audit is carried out on an annual basis, under the auspices of the RRAI, to verify compliance with the Voluntary Code of Practice. The Code will be updated from time to time. The outcomes of the annual audit are included in the independent Chairman's annual report to the Minister for Justice and Equality.

8. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A transparent and credible complaints procedure regarding the implementation of this Code is critical to its success. Complaints regarding implementation of the Voluntary Code should in the first instance be acknowledged, dealt with and resolved at store level by the Store Manager or the holder of the alcohol licence.

It should be noted that if a customer's complaint regarding compliance with the Code is not dealt with to their satisfaction, they have the right to forward their complaint in writing to the following address:

The Chairman
Responsible Retailing of Alcohol in Ireland (RRAI)
84-86 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2

or by email to: chairman@rrai.ie

or they may call the RRAI's 24-hour telephone hotline on **free-phone 1800 84 80 80**.

Copies of all complaints and resolutions dealt with at store level should be forwarded to an agreed central point and a designated individual within each group or chain.

WHAT IS THE RRAI

In 2009, the Irish retailing industry established a body called Responsible Retailing of Alcohol in Ireland (RRAI) under the independent Chairmanship of Mr. Padraic White.

The main objectives of the body are to:

- Communicate the Code to all relevant stakeholders;
- Support participating retailers with relevant information and training products;
- Measure compliance with the Code by means of an independent retail audit;
- Establish a credible and effective customer complaints procedure regarding the Code.

The Chairman of the RRAI presents an independent report on the industry's compliance with the Code to the Minister for Justice and Equality on an annual basis.

CONCLUSION

Should an individual store have any queries regarding the Code of Practice, or this briefing document, it should in the first instance seek clarification from the appropriate person within its own head office. Should the store require further copies of any of these documents, they are available from its own head office, and electronic copies are available from the RRAI's website (www.rrai.ie).