

## Alcohol Container Registration Transition

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. What is the BCMB?

The Beverage Container Management Board (BCMB) is the organization that oversees the beverage container recycling industry in Alberta. Its mandate is to regulate and enhance a leading beverage container system that protects Alberta’s environment, and it has delegated authority from the Government of Alberta to do so.

#### 2. Why do beverage containers need to be registered?

Provincial regulation requires that all beverage containers (including containers for alcohol, non-alcohol and cannabis beverages) sold in Alberta be registered with the BCMB. Only beverage containers that have been approved by the BCMB can be sold in the province. All beverage containers are collected through Alberta’s province-wide depot network, necessitating a streamlined approach to container registration.

Through the registration process, the BCMB determines if a beverage container can be recycled in a manner that supports efficient and effective recycling (e.g., recycling method, the amount of recoverable materials, prevention of contamination in the recycling system, etc.).

#### 3. How does Alberta’s beverage container registration process compare to that in other provinces?

While each province/territory has a unique beverage container management approach, recycling programs in Alberta and across Canada are transitioning towards Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) — a policy approach that shifts the physical and financial burden of collecting, sorting, processing and recycling waste to the producer and away from local governments and the public.

Although Alberta’s new EPR legislation does not yet extend to beverage containers, container registration is a key component of the EPR approach. It enhances consumer accessibility, encourages higher recycling rates and supports well-coordinated beverage container management.

#### 4. What are the recycling standards that must be met for containers to be recycled?

To determine if a beverage container is recyclable, [click here](#) for more information and for the **BCMB Approved Materials List**.

## 5. What is changing for liquor agencies related to container registration?

Currently, liquor agencies register products with Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) on behalf of the alcohol manufacturers/product owners that they represent in Alberta. AGLC then registers the containers with the BCMB on behalf of the liquor agencies.

Beginning in late February 2024, AGLC will no longer register alcohol **containers** with the BCMB on behalf of liquor agencies. **Liquor agencies will be required to register new containers directly with the BCMB through its new registration portal.**

This will streamline all container registrations in a new system that has been developed by the BCMB.

*\*The exception to the new process is the registration of containers exempt from the recycling system (e.g., kegs managed through a separate deposit program; wooden casks/barrels). Information for these containers is still to be provided to AGLC. A complete list of BCMB-exempt containers will be posted on the Liquor Agency Portal at the time the new container registration process is implemented.*

## 6. With the switch to the BCMB managing the registration of alcohol containers, what role will AGLC have related to the sale of alcohol products in Alberta?

AGLC will maintain responsibility for registering all alcohol **products** in Alberta. Agencies will continue to register their **products** with AGLC in the same manner as they currently do; however, now the information required for **container** registration will be provided directly to the BCMB (not AGLC) by agencies.

## 7. Why is a new registration system and process being implemented for alcohol container registrations?

This change will streamline the alcohol container registration process and ensure **all** beverage manufacturers (including alcohol, non-alcohol and cannabis beverages) will follow the same process for registration.

The change will also support more timely and accurate processing and information exchange. Providing container information directly to the BCMB will allow the organization to evaluate the container material and approve its use. It will allow liquor agencies to confirm a container's eligibility in Alberta with the BCMB and ask questions about unique and novel containers.

## 8. Why do containers and products need to be registered separately with the two organizations?

Registering containers and products separately aligns the processes more closely with each organization's mandate (e.g. AGLC is responsible for alcohol products and the BCMB is responsible for the containers).

Liquor agencies will register **containers** with the BCMB directly (the new process) while still registering the **alcohol/product** separately with AGLC. The alcohol/product registration will be finalized by AGLC after receiving the BCMB's container registration approval.

**9. Does this mean liquor agencies have to re-register all their current containers/products in the BCMB's new system?**

No. All existing registration information is being transitioned from AGLC to the BCMB's new registration system and linked with the liquor agent account (registrant account) in the BCMB's database. There will be no need for liquor agencies to re-enter existing account information or container registrations that were completed on their behalf by AGLC.

As part of the account pre-registration and testing period that has already begun, liquor agencies will review their accounts and container registrations to confirm they are complete. An email will be coming prior to the transition date asking you to sign in and set an account password and with instructions on how to confirm your account and container information. BCMB registrations officers will work with liquor agencies to update any incomplete registrant accounts and container registrations (e.g., missing contact info, missing UPCs, etc.).

Liquor agencies will begin container self-registration for all **new container registrations in late February 2024**.

**10. Will there be delays for liquor agencies by having to register the containers with the BCMB and the products with AGLC?**

While there will be a two-part process for registrations (container and product), the system being developed by the BCMB will be simple and efficient to use. Once liquor agencies are familiar with the system, and they have all the required information for registering containers, the process will not be time-consuming.

The new container registration system will provide efficiencies in the registration process and the ability for AGLC and BCMB to share product/container data. This will include issuing a container registration number to the applicant as soon as the registration process begins which will be used in both systems for easy tracking/management.

Once the container registration process has started with the BCMB, liquor agencies can begin the same process they currently follow for registering the product with AGLC. Approvals should occur within the same two to three-week timeline currently in place.

The BCMB has increased staffing for its registrations team to support the process change and subsequent increase in container registrations. This will ensure review and approval timelines will still be met.

**11. Will the BCMB's new alcohol container registration process result in any additional fees for liquor agencies?**

No, there will be no additional fees for liquor agencies as a result of the new registration process. The existing one-time fee of \$60 for a manufacturer to register with the BCMB will be waived for liquor agencies, and the BCMB no longer charges a fee for each new container registration submission.

Additionally, liquor agencies will continue to be represented by AGLC, the deemed manufacturer for alcohol products in Alberta, so there is no change to the reporting and remittance requirements and therefore no requirement for an initial remittance deposit to the Collection System Agent (ABCRC) for existing and new liquor agencies.

## **12. When do liquor agencies have to start using the new system?**

The transition to liquor agency container self-registration will begin in late February 2024.

In October 2023, all **non-alcoholic** manufacturers (who already register their containers directly with the BCMB) transitioned to the new portal in advance of liquor agencies. This transition is assisting with system testing ahead of liquor agencies using the registration portal.

The BCMB and AGLC will continue to update liquor agencies and all other stakeholders throughout the transition process and will advise if there are any timeline changes.

## **13. What kind of information needs to be provided to register an alcohol container?**

The information required to register an alcohol container includes the following (which must be printed on the container in English):

- Brand (Supplier)
- Flavour (Product Long Name)
- Size (metric)
- Container material
- UPC/UCC-13 (if applicable) - While UPCs/UCC-13s (barcodes) are not currently mandated for beverage containers, the BCMB strongly recommends manufacturers (or liquor agencies on their behalf) ensure their containers have one. The beverage container recycling system relies on barcodes for confirmation of registration and material sorting at depots. Barcodes will make the registration process more efficient, as liquor agencies will be required to contact the BCMB directly to register any container without a barcode.
- Images – front and back images of the label displaying the information noted above; detailed image requirements can be found in the BCMB’s [Image Requirements Guide](#)
- Sales start date – the date the product will start selling/being distributed in Alberta

Detailed information on the BCMB’s registration requirements can be found on their website. [Click here.](#)

**14. Liquor agencies have not previously been required to provide images of their product/container. Why is that now necessary and will it make the registration process more involved?**

Container images make it much easier for the BCMB to review containers, making the verification of information and the approval process more efficient. Images can be taken on a phone or any other device and easily uploaded in the registration system. Stock images can be provided as well.

Front and back images of the label are required, displaying the brand (Supplier), flavour (Product Long Name), size, material and UPC/UCC-13. If there is no UPC/UCC-13, an image of the back of the container must still be provided. The UPC/UCC-13 must be the one on the container itself, not any external packaging.

**Additional image for plastic containers:** If the beverage container is made of plastic, a third image of the container noting the recycling symbol and the resin (material) identifier (usually molded into the container on the bottom or side bottom) must be uploaded as well.

**15. Where can alcohol manufacturers get a UPC/UCC-13 (barcode) if they don't have one for their product?**

In Canada, contact GS1 Canada at (416) 510-8039 or 1-800-567-7084 to purchase a company prefix. With that number, your company can assign bar codes for its products. You can visit GS1 Canada's website at [www.gs1ca.org](http://www.gs1ca.org) or email them at [info@gs1ca.org](mailto:info@gs1ca.org). Manufacturers outside of Canada should contact their national GS1 affiliate ([www.gs1.org](http://www.gs1.org)).

**16. Will training be provided for the new process/system?**

The BCMB and AGLC will continue to provide information and updates leading up to, during and after the launch of the new system. In previous communications, we indicated that webinars would be held on the new online registration process early this year. However, to ensure the information is easily available and accessible for liquor agencies at any time, AGLC and the BCMB are instead developing a brief video on the change and why it is taking place. This video will contain information similar to that in these [FAQs and the fact sheets](#) already provided and will be posted online by mid-February.

In addition, the BCMB is also producing a portal user guide and a series of step-by-step instructional videos on:

1. How to access your account for the first time.
2. How to register a container.

The BCMB will work closely with liquor agencies throughout the transition and afterward to support them in every way possible as they begin registering new containers.

**17. Does the process/system change if I'm a non-alcohol manufacturer who has always registered my containers directly with the BCMB or if I'm a depot owner?**

Other than the transition to the new registration portal that has already taken place for non-alcohol manufacturers, the change in process for liquor agencies has no direct impact on you or depots.

However, the alcohol registration data in the new system will be improved and consistent. The new process will ensure all alcohol container registration records are complete and meet minimum standards (e.g., images, UPCs/UCC-13s, etc.), alleviating any inefficiencies in accessing the information in the BCMB registration portal.

The new system will also provide depots with access to data and functions not possible in the old system (e.g., updating depot business hours) and will enhance security and ensure system stability against modern threats.

**18. Who do we contact if we have questions or concerns?**

The BCMB will work closely with liquor agencies through the transition and afterward to provide support in every way possible with this process change.

Questions or concerns related to beverage **container registration** should be directed to the BCMB at: [registrations@bcmb.ab.ca](mailto:registrations@bcmb.ab.ca)

Questions or concerns related to **alcohol/product registration** should be directed to AGLC at: [product@aglc.ca](mailto:product@aglc.ca)