

# Board of License Commissioners (Liquor Board)



# The BUZZ

## ***Not Just Another News Letter***

*The Buzz provides licensees and community members with industry updates, topics of interest and rules & regulations of the BOLC.*



**Terence Sheppard, Director**

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Greetings from the Board of License Commissioners, license renewal season is here, and we understand that this time of year can be hectic and, at times, frustrating. The most efficient time to submit renewal documents is within the first two weeks of each month. Submitting early allows sufficient time to resolve any tax holds and to obtain any missing or additional documentation. Please be advised that submitting renewal materials during the last week of the month may result in processing delays and could require you to file for an extension and pay additional fees. The BOLC is committed to ensuring that all licensees are able to renew their licenses in a timely and efficient manner. We encourage you to carefully review your renewal packet in its entirety and to contact our office promptly should you have any questions, issues, or concerns. Please note the following renewal deadlines:

**(Class A Licenses: March 2, 2026) (Class B Licenses: April 1, 2026) (Class C & D Licenses: May 1, 2026)**

### February

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

### March

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
						28
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### April

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

### RENEWAL CALENDAR

#### KEY:

**We strongly recommend submitting your renewal documents prior to the dates marked in red.**

**\*No Highlight = BEST**  
time for processing the renewal of a license.

**\*\*Yellow Highlight =**  
Dates marked in **yellow** indicate high-traffic days.

**\*\*\*Red Highlight =**  
Dates marked in **red** represent the busiest days of the year and may require extended wait times.

Sincerely,

Terence Sheppard, Director  
Board of License  
Commissioners

## Accela-brating a New Chapter in Licensing!



The Board of License Commissioners (BOLC) is excited to announce a major upgrade to our licensing and inspection system!

The BOLC has been working hard over the past few months to build a new online portal using the Accela Civic Platform; a modern, user-friendly system designed to make applying for and managing licenses faster, easier, and more transparent.

### **What is Accela?**

Accela is a software company that provides cloud-based solutions for government agencies; primarily at the local and state levels to help manage licensing, permits and inspections.

### **What's Changing?**

Beginning July 2026, you'll be able to:

- Apply for licenses online – No more paper forms or in-person-only submissions.
- Submit applications 24 hours a day 7 days a week.
- Track application status in real time.
- Upload documents and receive updates - all from your computer or mobile device.
- Renew licenses and pay fees online.

### **Why Are We Doing This?**

- Go Green—reduces the use of paper applications.
- Reduce office visit wait times.
- Improving access and convenience for residents and business owners.
- Increasing transparency and communication throughout the licensing process.

### **Stay tuned for more updates, including:**

- A detailed launch date.
- Step-by-step guides and video tutorials.
- In-person and virtual training sessions (if needed)

# TOYS FOR TOTS

The Board of License Commissioners proudly participated in its 1st Annual Toy Drive in support of Toys for Tots, in partnership with the Prince George's County Police Department and the United States Marine Corps. Giving back to the community is a meaningful priority, and we were honored to support children and families in need.

BOLC staff members, alongside other dedicated volunteers, came together to assist with the distribution of toys, helping to spread joy and holiday cheer throughout the Christmas season. We extend our sincere thanks to the Department of Housing for donating to this initiative, which exemplifies the strength and impact of County agencies working together to better serve our community.



Pictured: Chief Nader (Prince George's County Police Department), Chief Clark (Board of License Commissioners), Board Chair Bridgwaters-Simms, Commissioner Norman, Administrative Manager Ms. Bell and BOLC Staff.





## FACT CHECK

As Chief Liquor Inspector for the Prince George's County Board of License Commissioners, I want to emphasize the importance of strict compliance with **Rule and Regulation #70**, particularly the provisions governing **signage and visibility into licensed establishments**.

The signage portion of this regulation is intended to ensure that there is **no excessive or obstructive signage** placed on, in, or around a licensed premises that would block or impede a **clear and unobstructed view into the interior of the establishment**. Maintaining visibility from the exterior is a critical component of effective regulatory oversight, public safety, and responsible operation of licensed businesses.

Over-signage—whether in the form of window coverings, posters, decals, banners, or other materials—undermines the purpose of this rule and may create conditions that hinder proper monitoring and compliance. Licensees are required to regularly review their premises and ensure that all signage conforms to the limits established under Rule and Regulation #70. **The agency's practice, when enforcing this rule, is to ensure there is at least 50% visibility into the establishment.**



Adherence to this requirement is a condition of licensure. Failure to comply may result in enforcement action by this office, including correction orders, fines, or further disciplinary measures as deemed appropriate by the Board. We strongly encourage all license holders to take proactive steps to ensure their establishments remain in full compliance at all times. Now is the time to review **Rule and Regulation #70**.

### R.R. NO. 70 – SIGNAGE

The holder of a Class A, B, or D alcoholic beverage license shall provide visible access into the licensed premises from the exterior of the licensed premises in order to ensure the safety and well-being of patrons and employees. A Liquor Inspector or other law enforcement officer shall have a clear view into a licensed premises before entering the premises. The Board may require that licensees remove window signs that are deemed by the Board to be excessive or obstructive to view.

A licensee must maintain the licensed premises in a clean and orderly manner. A licensee is prohibited from allowing the premises to deteriorate and become an eyesore to the neighborhood in which it is located. The Board may consider the appearance of the establishment in determining whether that establishment will accommodate the public. The Board may regulate the interior and exterior maintenance of the premises. It may regulate the nature, size, number and placement of signs to ensure that the premises continues to accommodate the public. The Board may order a licensee to make reasonable changes to a premises. The Board may impose a fine and/or suspend or revoke the license of any licensee who does not comply with such an order.



## OPERATION CLEAN CREATES AWARENESS

**Upcoming events that the BOLC wants you to know!!**

**“OPERATION CLEAN” was such a success, it’s coming back!!**

Operation Clean is a Board of License Commissioners’ effort to ensure licensed liquor establishments are operating within County and State standards, regarding trash and debris on the premises, as well as an over abundance of signage on the property. The focus of this operation will be liquor stores operating in Prince George’s County.

Liquor Inspectors will examine the outside grounds of the premises in search of trash, debris and over abundance of signage that can be seen from the outside (front glass) of the establishment. This effort was in support of the County’s Going Green Initiative to make lifestyle changes to reduce environmental impact on Prince George’s County. Establishments found not in compliance will be given an opportunity to make corrections within 15 days.

“Operation Clean” will take place in the upcoming months. **Stay Tuned!**



## THE HISTORIAN

### How Bourbon Whiskey Overtook Rum in Americans Glass

The last two hundred years, whiskey has been the preferred beverage in the United States, but this wasn’t always the case. During the colonial era, rum was the preferred beverage; it is estimated that the average person consumed about 4 gallons annually. English rum distillation took place on the Island of Barbados in the 1630s, but the beverage was becoming so popular that demand began to exceed the supply. By the 1690s, New England began distilling rum; this helped meet the demand for rum in the colonies.

Rum distilled in New England boomed and they began trading with other colonies in the New World, creating a demand for molasses, the main ingredient in making rum. Britain had a limit on how much molasses each colony was allowed to trade, which led to smuggling molasses with French colonies (particularly Haiti) in the West Indies. In 1733, Britain passed the Molasses Act, which became very controversial in the colonies.

Now that the colonies had distilleries and had a hard time getting molasses, something different began to happen, especially in the southern colonies -- using corn to make alcoholic beverages. Corn was cheap, grew locally and abundantly, and there is plenty of land to grow it. During the American Revolution, whiskey was becoming very popular, and by the end of George Washington’s presidency, he constructed a whiskey distillery in Mount Vernon in 1797. He was the biggest whiskey producer for a small period, and the distillery is still operational today.

In 1803, the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory, which doubled the country westward, bringing new land to produce more farming products including corn. This enabled distillers to ramp up whiskey production. By 1830, rum was no longer America’s favorite alcoholic beverage, and it has never recovered.



## BOLC ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE

The Board of License Commissioners (BOLC) proudly conducted its Fourth Annual Food Drive in 2025 to support individuals and families in need throughout Prince George's County. This year's effort was met with overwhelming generosity and community spirit, resulting in donations that exceeded contributions from previous years by more than double.

The BOLC extends its sincere gratitude to the Police Accountability Board for their meaningful contribution and support of this initiative. Their participation helped strengthen the collaborative effort among county agencies dedicated to serving our residents. The success of this year's food drive reflects the continued commitment of county employees to the well-being of Prince George's County and its citizens.

Through collective action and shared purpose, the BOLC and its partners demonstrated that public service extends beyond daily responsibilities and into making a tangible difference in the lives of those most in need.

The BOLC looks forward to continuing this annual tradition and thanks everyone who contributed to making this year's food drive a remarkable success.



## KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW

### NEW OR UPDATED POLICIES

The Board of License Commissioners (BOLC) serves a quasi-judicial function in administering and enforcing the Alcoholic Beverage Laws of the State of Maryland and the Rules and Regulations of the BOLC. Over the past few months the BOLC drafted new and revised several Rules and Regulations that have been approved. Below is the list of new/revised Rules and Regulations:

**RR #35— Tradename**

**RR #89— Compliance with Governmental Authority**

To download the new Rules and Regulations you may go to the BOLC website at <http://bolc.mypgc.us>

### COMPLIANCE: IT'S THE LAW

Pursuant to Sections 6-304 and 26-2707 of the Alcoholic Beverages Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, a licensee or any of his/her employees or agents, may not sell, serve, furnish or allow the consumption or possession of any alcoholic beverages at any time to any person under the age of **twenty-one (21)** years.



# ASKED & ANSWERED



## **Q1: How do I apply for an Alcoholic Beverage License? Where do I start?**

A: Applicants must be a resident and a registered voter in the State of Maryland.

Step 1 – Applications may be found at the BOLC's website at: <http://bolc.mypgc.us>

*Note: Application must be TYPED and fully completed.*

Step 2 – Click on New Application Process and select New/Transfer Application.

Step 3 – Submit a copy of a floor plan or interior layout design of the establishment.

Step 4 – Submit a copy of 2 forms of ID (refer to page 1 of the Rules & Regulations)

Step 5 - Submit the application fee of \$700 in the form of a Money Order, Cashier's Check or Certified Check payable to Prince George's County. (Cash, Business and Personal Checks will not be accepted)

Step 6- Complete a Criminal Background application in the State of Maryland.

## **Q2: I'm having an event, is BYOB or BYOL permitted in Prince Georges County? (Pursuant to 26-2501 of the Annotated Code of Maryland)**

A: **NO:** A person, including an owner or operator of an establishment may not serve, keep, or allow to be consumed by a customer, alcoholic beverages from supplies that the customer purchased, reserved, or otherwise brought to the establishment from supplies purchased or otherwise brought to the establishment by the owner or operator of the establishment or an agent of the owner or operator.

## **Q3: What class of alcoholic beverage license is best for my establishment?**

A: Types of classes of licenses available:

Class A- Liquors Stores (Not permitted to issue this class of license since 1996 per the Annotated Code of Maryland)

Class B- Restaurant, Lounges, Hotels, Entertainment Facility (Stadiums)

Class C- Veteran, Fraternal Organizations, Golf Courses, Country Clubs

Class D- Taverns, Salons, etc.

## **Q4: How do I get a mobile liquor license?**

A: The county does not issue mobile liquor licenses; however, you may contact the State of Maryland Alcohol and Tobacco Commission at 410-260-7314 to inquire about their policy on mobile liquor license.

## **Q5: How do I know if an establishment is applying for an alcoholic beverage license in my community?**

A: The BOLC advertises in both the Prince George's Post and Gazette newspapers at least two (2) weeks prior to a scheduled hearing. Citizens may also check the BOLC website for monthly agendas. Bulletins are also posted on the establishment requesting alcoholic beverage license in each community.

## **Q6: How do I submit a letter of support or a letter of opposition for an establishment applying for an alcoholic beverage license in my community?**

A: Citizens/Communities/Attorneys may submit a letter to [BLC@co.pg.md.us](mailto:BLC@co.pg.md.us) at least two (2) weeks prior to the hearing date.

## **Q7: Where do I go to obtain a criminal background check?**

A: Applicants applying for an alcoholic beverage license must use the LiveScan Form obtained from the BOLC office or website with the BOLC agency authorization code. After completing the form, applicants can go to any fingerprinting service in the State of Maryland to have their criminal background check completed.

For listings, please visit: <https://www.dpssc.state.md.us/publicservs/fingerprint.shtml>

## **Q8: How do I or the community protest a renewal of an alcoholic beverage license?**

A: Citizens must submit a written letter protesting the renewal of the alcoholic beverage license supported by a signed petition (must be a registered voter of the State of Maryland) to the BOLC no later than March 1<sup>st</sup>. Following the submission of the letter, a public hearing will be scheduled.