



Responsible Service Tip Sheet: SERVER-INITIATED AUTOMATED ALCOHOL DISPENSING SYSTEMS

INFORMATION SHEET FROM THE ALCOHOL AND GAMING COMMISSION OF ONTARIO



In 2011, minimum system requirements were put in place to govern the operation of server-initiated automated alcohol dispensing systems used at liquor licensed establishments. Any such system used by patrons must meet these minimum system requirements.

Server initiated automated alcohol dispensing systems are computerized systems which are pre-programmed by a server to dispense a fixed amount of alcohol to the patrons who have ordered it. The patrons then remove the alcohol from the system only when they are about to consume it, thereby keeping the alcohol fresh and at the correct temperature. Servers continue to monitor and control the amount of alcohol dispensed for each patron group and ensure that patrons do not become intoxicated.

The establishment of these requirements was consistent with the AGCO's move towards a standards-based and compliance-focused regulatory framework, which establishes regulatory standards in which licensees must operate, while allowing them more operational flexibility to respond to changing market conditions in the hospitality sector. While providing that flexibility, the minimum system requirements for these products ensure that:

- Licensees remain in control of the sale and service of liquor in their establishment.
- Licensees and their staff are able to continue monitoring patron consumption of alcohol to ensure that it is being served and sold responsibly.

COMPLIANCE FRAMEWORK

Either at the time of licence renewal (for existing licensees) or at the time of new licence application, a licensee/applicant must indicate whether they are using a server initiated automated alcohol dispensing system and if so, as part of the standard risk assessment performed on all licensees, the AGCO will identify any risks associated with the use of a server initiated automated alcohol dispensing system. For example, the location of the dispensing system may be considered as part of this risk assessment. Systems that are located in enclosed areas (i.e. private dining rooms, karaoke rooms or VIP areas in adult entertainment venues) will be considered as potential of higher risk than those which are located in more open and visible areas.

The outcome of that risk assessment may be informed by a number of factors and as an example may result in the following:

1. The preparation of a compliance plan for review and potential approval by the Registrar that identifies how the system meets the minimum requirements. Additionally the applicant may be asked to describe all of the processes and procedures that will be put in place to ensure proper monitoring of the consumption of liquor.
2. The imposition of risk-based licensing conditions by The Registrar of Alcohol and Gaming to mitigate any potential risks identified, including:
 - The holder of the licence shall sell and serve liquor only in single serve containers of no more than 341 ml (12 oz) of beer, etc.
 - The holder of the licence shall ensure approved server initiated automated alcohol dispensing systems provided to patrons have automatic mechanical controls that require server intervention and assessment of the patrons' current state after XY oz (ml) of beer, XY oz (ml) of wine or XY oz (ml) of spirits before any additional liquor service takes place.

MINIMUM SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

1. The system must be computer controlled and retain records of the amount of alcohol dispensed for the patron group, including the details of how much and at what times, for a minimum period of 30 days.
2. Master system can only be activated or unlocked by a person in charge.
3. System and tap can only be turned on by a server activating service to a location where the alcohol is dispensed. The tap must begin in an inactive state making it impossible for a patron to pour alcohol.
4. System must have unique server activation data, so that each activation or transaction is tracked to each individual server.
5. The system shall provide for the server to set the amount of alcohol for each order.
6. The servings of alcohol can be paid for before dispensing starts or the system can run a tab, but the system cannot accept any kind of payment, including any kind of pre-paid credit, from the patron directly.
7. Once the patrons have consumed the limited amount of alcohol authorized by the server, the system must shut off. The system cannot be reactivated by a patron.
8. The server must be able to shut off the system if a patron's condition warrants stopping the consumption of alcohol.
9. Any server, manager, AGCO Inspector or police officer must be able to ascertain the amount of alcohol dispensed to the patrons over the time they have been there, no matter how many transactions have taken place, while the patrons have used the system. The system must be able to track consumption by the group of patrons, regardless if different people pay for different "rounds" of alcohol and different servers are involved in the activations throughout the evening.
10. Alcohol must not be accessible by patrons other than through the server activated system e.g., kegs or bottles must be securely stored by being locked within the unit itself or stored in a more remote, secure area.