

Alcohol, entertainment and late night refreshment – FAQs

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1. What activities do I need a licence for?

Under the Licensing Act 2003, you need a licence to carry out any of the following activities:

- Performances of plays
- Exhibition of films
- Provision of indoor sporting events
- Provision of boxing or wrestling entertainment
- Performances of live music
- Performances of pre-recorded music
- Performances of dance
- Provision of entertainment similar to music or dancing
- Sale of late night refreshment (hot food or hot drinks sold between 11pm and 5am)
- Sale by retail of alcohol
- Supply of alcohol to members of a club

Entertainment is licensable if it is open to the public (or a section of the public), or for private entertainment provided with a view to profit. Premises that hire their facilities out for private parties will generally need to be licensed in the same way as those providing public events.

2. What are the licensing objectives?

The Licensing Act 2003 sets out four licensing objectives, and any decisions that we make must be based upon these objectives:

- prevention of crime and disorder
- public safety
- prevention of public nuisance
- protection of children from harm.

As a Licensing Authority we are required to carry out our licensing functions:

- with a view to promoting these licensing objectives
- with regard to our [statement of licensing policy](#)

with regard to any guidance issued to local authorities by the relevant government minister.

3. Where can I find licensed premises information?

On our licensing map you can find [Licensed premises information](#) i.e. activities, times, business type, licensee information.

4. Are any types of entertainment exempt from licensing?

Music may be exempt from licensing if it is incidental to another, non-licensable activity - for example, playing pre-recorded background music in a shopping centre.

You do not need a licence from us to show live television or play radio broadcasts (although you may require a valid TV licence, and other licences in respect of copyright payments). However, recording television programmes and replaying them later would be licensable.

The following activities are also exempt from licensing:

- films shown to advertise or demonstrate a product
- films that are part of an exhibit in an art gallery or museum
- entertainment incidental to a religious service
- entertainment provided at charity garden fetes
- morris dancing
- entertainment in a moving vehicle

5. Do I need a licence for busking or street performance?

Generally, busking and street performances are exempt from entertainment licensing requirements. Please see our [busking and street performance](#) page for further information.

6. Do I need a licence to let people drink alcohol if I am not selling it?

You only require a licence if you are selling or supplying alcohol for people to drink. The consumption of alcohol is not licensable, so, for example, a restaurant could run a 'bring your own bottle' policy, charging a small fee to provide empty wine glasses, without requiring a licence from us.

However, it should be noted that running a 'cashless' bar (where a bar at an event supplies alcohol for free, which is then paid for by the event organiser or customer at a later date) would require a licence.

7. Do I need a licence to sell alcohol wholesale?

Wholesalers may need a licence, depending on who they sell alcohol to. Any sales to members of the public, or to business proprietors for personal use, will be licensable, regardless of the quantity of alcohol supplied.

Only sales of alcohol to other wholesalers, or to the holders of Premises Licences, Club Premises Certificates and Temporary Event Notices, for resale under their own licences, will be exempt from licensing.

8. Can I licence an alcohol-delivery business?

Businesses selling alcohol over the telephone, by mail order or over the internet will need to be licensed in the same way as any other alcohol-retailing business. A Premises Licence must be held for the location at which alcohol is 'appropriated to the contract' - typically the warehouse or storage facility from which the alcohol is dispatched. The individual named on the licence as premises supervisor must also hold a Personal Licence. Extra care must be taken to ensure that alcohol is not sold or delivered to under-18s, and we would usually expect to see a comprehensive list of measures in your application setting out how you would achieve this.

9. Do I need a licence to brew or distil my own alcohol?

You will only need a licence from us if you intend to sell your own alcohol.

However, you may need to [register as a brewer](#) or [as a distiller](#) with HM Revenues & Customs, and duty may need to be paid on any alcohol that you produce.

10. I supply hot food/drink at night, but I do not sell it. Do I need a licence for late night refreshment?

Only businesses selling hot food or hot drinks to the public between 11pm and 5am will need a licence. There are also exemptions for the following:

- hot food or drinks given away for free
- hot drinks supplied by an automated vending machine
- hot food or drinks supplied by a registered charity
- hot food or drinks supplied on a moving vehicle
- hot food or drinks supplied to guests at a hotel
- hot food or drinks supplied by a recognised club to club members
- hot food or drinks supplied by an employer to his/her employees in their workplace

Supplying hot alcoholic drinks, such as Irish coffee, is not classified as late night refreshment, although a licence for the sale of alcohol will be required.

You must also register your premises with the Lambeth food, health and safety team (this is free of charge). Please complete the registration of a [food business establishment form](#).

11. Do outdoor events need different types of licences?

Outdoor events involving licensable activities will generally need to be licensed in the same way as indoor events - it is the activities being carried on that determine whether a licence is required, rather than the location.

The exception to this rule is for sporting events, which are not licensable if they take place outdoors.

Outdoor events may require extra types of authorisation in addition to a premises licence or temporary event notice.

- Events taking place on public roads will generally require the organiser to obtain a [traffic order](#), to restrict vehicle access to the road.
- [Events taking place in council-run parks and open spaces](#) will require authorisation from our Events team, and this should be obtained prior to applying for a licence. Large, high-profile events, and events with certain high-risk activities, may be asked to present their event proposal to a Safety Advisory Group, which will consist of police, ambulance, fire and transport authorities, as well as council officers from the licensing, noise, safety and parks teams.

12. What are Temporary Event Notices (TEN)?

Temporary Event Notices (TENs) can be used for small-scale, one-off or occasional events, such as community, school and charity fundraising events, at which you intend to sell or supply alcohol at anytime, provide regulated entertainment at anytime, or sell hot food/drink between 11pm and 5am.

- TENs can only be used for events where no more than 499 people (including staff and performers) are expected to attend
- a premises can use up to 12 TENs per calendar year, authorising events on no more than 21 calendar days in that year (a calendar day starts at midnight, so a TEN running from 11pm to 1am would count as two days)
- each TEN can last for up to 168 consecutive hours from start to finish
- there must be at least 24 hours between the end of one TEN and the start of another
- an individual (or a group of associates, business partners or family members) may only have five TENs per year (unless they hold a **Personal Licence** in which case they may have 50)
- no more than two of the five TENs (or ten of the 50 for Personal Licence holders) can be late TENs (see below for more information on late TEN's)
- TENs can only be held by persons over the age of 18.

If an event is expected to attract more than 499 persons, or last longer than 168 hours, or if it is intended to use the same premises to provide licensable activities on more than 12 occasions or 21 days per year, a **Premises Licence** will be required.

Section 68 of the Deregulation Act 2015 (which increases the number of TEN's that may be given in a year to 15 per premises) does not take effect until 2016.

13. Do I need a licence for music entertainment?

A licence is not required to stage a performance of live music, or the playing of recorded music if:

- it takes place between 8AM and 11PM; and
- it takes place at an alcohol on-licensed premises; and
- the audience is no more than 500 people

You also don't need a licence:

- to put on unamplified live music at any place between the same hours; or
- to put on amplified live music at a workplace between the same hours and provided the audience is no more than 500 people.

In other circumstances, a licence may be required. One licence application can cover all types of regulated entertainment and the sale or supply of alcohol.

There are exemptions from the need for a licence for music entertainment, in defined circumstances, including for:

- places of public worship, village halls, church halls and other similar buildings
- schools
- hospitals
- local authority premises
- incidental music - music that is incidental to other activities that aren't classed as regulated entertainment

14. Do I need a licence to put on a play or a performance of dance?

Whether a licence is needed for a performance of a play or a dance will depend on the circumstances. A licence is not required to stage a performance of a play or a performance of dance if:

- it takes place between 8AM and 11PM; and
- the audience is no more than 500 people

In other circumstances, a licence may be required. One licence application can cover all types of regulated entertainment and the sale or supply of alcohol. A licence is always required for any activity that is sexual entertainment.

15. Do I need a licence to stage an indoor sporting event?

Whether a licence is needed for an indoor sporting event will depend on the circumstances. A licence is not required to stage an indoor sporting event if:

- it takes place between 8AM and 11PM; and
- the number of spectators is not more than 1000 people.

In other circumstances, a licence may be required. One licence application can cover all types of regulated entertainment and the sale or supply of alcohol.

16. Do I need a licence to stage boxing or wrestling?

You will need a licence to stage boxing, wrestling and mixed martial arts. One licence application can cover all types of regulated entertainment and the sale or supply of alcohol.

17. Do I need a licence to screen a film?

A licence is needed to screen a film or exhibit moving pictures. One licence application can cover all types of regulated entertainment and the sale or supply of alcohol.

There are exemptions from the need for a licence for film entertainment, in defined circumstances as set out in the Guidance, including for:

- places of public worship, village halls, church halls and other similar buildings
- education
- incidental film – moving pictures that are incidental to other activities that aren't classed as regulated entertainment
- television broadcasts

In other circumstances, a licence may be required to show a film:

- in public
- or in private, if those attending are charged for entry and the intention is to make a profit, including raising money for charity.

Licensing of entertainment under the Licensing Act 2003 is entirely separate from copyright authorisation to show films in public.