



Importing Bottled Alcohol Beverages Into the United States

Certain requirements apply to imported alcohol beverages imported in packages (i.e., bottles or other non-bulk containers) and persons engaged in the business of importing them. Those requirements are summarized below. For information about importation of alcohol beverages for personal use, please visit the [Personal Importation of Beverage Alcohol Products](#) webpage.

Federal Basic Permit

Persons seeking to engage in the business of importing distilled spirits, wine, or malt beverages as defined in the [Federal Alcohol Administration Act](#) (FAA Act) into the United States must apply for a Federal Basic Importer's Permit ("Importer's Permit"). To obtain an Importer's Permit, the importer must file an "*Application for Basic Permit under the Federal Alcohol Administration Act*" on [TTB F 5100.24](#) (PDF) with TTB's National Revenue Center (NRC). The process may be done electronically, through [Permits Online](#), or by submitting a paper copy of the form. TTB does not charge fees for issuing these permits. Please visit [Permits Online](#) for additional information including tutorials, tips for navigating the system, and current permit processing times.

To obtain an Importer's Permit, the importer must maintain and staff a business office in the United States. If you are unable to conduct business in the United States, you must contract with an existing licensed importer in the United States. Making a commercial arrangement with an existing licensed importer eliminates the need to obtain an importer's permit.

If you plan to sell at wholesale alcohol beverages other than those beverages that you directly import with your Importer's Permit, you must also apply for a Wholesaler's Basic Permit, unless those beverages are not subject to the FAA Act. You may apply for both permits at the same time through [Permits Online](#).

If you need assistance completing your permit application, or have questions about the process, please contact the NRC toll-free at 877-882-3277, or by email at TTBInternetQuestions@ttb.gov.

Taxes, Duties, and Registration

Importers are responsible for all applicable Federal excise taxes and duties. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) collects all applicable Federal excise taxes on [distilled spirits](#), [wine](#), and [beer](#) as defined in the Internal Revenue Code. CBP also collects all applicable duties. Additional information on excise taxes may be found on our [tax and fee rates](#) page. For information on duties, visit the CBP [Duty Rates](#) webpage.

Importers must register as alcohol dealers and complete [TTB F 5630.5\(d\)](#) (PDF), "*Alcohol Dealer Registration*," before engaging in business. Importers must also file this form with TTB when there is a change in registration information and when discontinuing their business.

Certificate of Label Approval Requirements

After receiving the Importer's Permit, the importer must obtain a TTB-issued Certificate of Label Approval (COLA) for each unique product/label for distilled spirits, wine, or malt beverages as defined in the [FAA Act](#). To obtain a COLA, the importer must file an "*Application for and Certification/Exemption of Label/Bottle Approval*" on [TTB F 5100.31](#) (PDF) with TTB's Advertising, Labeling, and Formulation Division (ALFD). The process may be done electronically, through [COLAs Online](#), or by submitting a paper copy of the form. The importer must possess a COLA at the time of importation.

Note: As part of the COLA process, the importer may need to obtain pre-COLA product approval, depending on the product to be imported. For information on pre-COLA product approval, see [Industry Circular 2007-4](#). The industry circular's attachments for [wine](#), [malt beverages](#), and [distilled spirits](#) indicate whether a product requires pre-COLA approval, as well as what type of evaluation, if applicable.

If you have any questions regarding the COLA process you may contact ALFD at 202-453-2250 or [Submit an Online Inquiry](#).

Natural Wine Certificate

Importers of wine made from sound ripe grapes or other sound, ripe fruit produced after December 31, 2004, must comply with certification requirements set forth under the [Miscellaneous Trade and Technical Corrections Act of 2004](#) to ensure that the practices and procedures used to produce the imported wine constitute proper cellar treatment. For some grape wines imported from countries with which the United States has an enological practices agreement, no certification is required. Please refer to our [list](#) of excepted countries.

Certification may consist of:

- a statement from the producing country's government or government-approved entity having oversight or control of enological practices. This form of certification includes the results of a laboratory analysis of the wine performed by either a government laboratory or a laboratory certified by the government of the producing country.

or...

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- a statement from the importer, that is, a "self-certification." See "Who may self-certify?" in our [Certification Requirements Q&As](#) for more information on this certification method and who may self-certify.

Certificate of Age and Origin Requirements

A certificate of age or origin is required for certain wines and distilled spirits imported into the United States. The [Certificate of Age and Origin Requirements for Imported Alcohol Beverages](#) webpage provides a comprehensive list of such certificate of age and origin requirements.

Other Regulatory Considerations

In addition to the TTB requirements for importation, the importer must also comply with any applicable requirements of other Federal agencies. For example, the [Bioterrorism Act of 2002](#) requires that anyone who manufactures, processes, packs, or holds food (including alcohol beverages) for consumption in the United States to register with the FDA. An importer of alcohol beverages is also required to provide prior notice of food (including alcohol beverages) to be imported or offered for import to the United States. For additional information, visit the FDA [Prior Notice of Imported Foods](#) webpage.

The importer must also meet the requirements of the State and local jurisdictions where the importer is engaged in the importation of beverage alcohol products. State and local jurisdictions may have their own importation requirements in addition to the Federal requirements. Importers should contact their [State alcohol control board](#) and/or local authorities for more information.

Additional Resources

If you have any further questions on importing, please contact TTB's International Affairs Division at 202-453-2260 or IAD@ttb.gov.

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