TTB Disclaimer

This information is being presented to help the public to understand and comply with the laws and regulations that the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) administers.

It is not intended to establish any new, or change any existing, definitions, interpretations, standards, or procedures regarding those laws and regulations.

In addition, this presentation may be made obsolete by changes in laws and regulations.

Please consult the applicable laws and regulations for the most current requirements.

Sample documents (such as records, returns, and labels) are for illustrative purposes only and contain fictitious data.
Agenda

In this session we’ll cover:

– COLA basics
– Mandatory label information
– Keg collars
– Prohibited labeling practices
– Optional label claims
COLAs: What, Who, Why, When, and How?
What is a COLA?

• **Certificate Of Label Approval**

• Authorizes:
  – The bottling of malt beverages, or
  – The removal of bottled malt beverages from customs custody (imports)
  – The product must bear labels identical to the labels affixed to the face of the certificate, or labels with changes authorized by the certificate or other public guidance

• TTB’s approval of a COLA does not constitute trademark protection

• See **TTB Form 5100.31**

27 CFR 7.22, 7.25, and 13.11
Who Can File an Application for a COLA?

• In order to file an application for label approval, you must have either:
  – A Brewer’s Notice, or
  – A Basic Permit (Importer)

• Permits and Brewer’s Notices are issued by the TTB National Revenue Center in Cincinnati, Ohio
  – Permits Online
  – (877) 882-3277 or TTBGov - Contact NRC
Why Do I Need a COLA?

• The FAA Act generally requires bottlers and importers of malt beverages to obtain a COLA in order to prevent the sale or other introduction of products that are bottled, packaged, or labeled in violation of law.
At What Stage Do I Apply for Label Approval?

• The COLA must be obtained **prior to bottling** (domestically bottled) or **prior to removal from customs custody** (imported in containers)
  – Bottling includes cans and kegs

• See TTB website for average processing times for COLA applications

27 CFR 7.22 and 7.25
When is a COLA Not Required?

1. When a beer is not a malt beverage under the FAA Act:
   – Usually because it is not made with both malted barley and hops (See TTB Ruling 2008-3)
   – Special rules apply to saké, which is labeled as a wine under the FAA Act if it has at least 7 percent alcohol by volume

27 CFR 7.6
2. When a malt beverage will be sold exclusively in the state in which it was bottled:
   – Unless the state where the malt beverage is bottled requires an approved COLA from TTB

27 CFR 7.4 and 7.21
Even if a COLA is Not Required…

- The following regulatory requirements apply regardless of COLA requirements:
  - Government Health Warning Statement per 27 CFR part 16
  - Markings per 27 CFR part 25, Subpart J (for domestic brewers)
  - Formulas (when required)
How Do I Apply for Label Approval?

• COLAs Online
  – Step-by-step guidance
  – Validation checks along the way
  – Application status updates via email

• COLAs Online Customer Page

• You must register for a COLAs Online account before you can use it
COLAs Online
Conditionally Approved Status

• Under limited circumstances, TTB may propose changes to the information you entered in the application to make it match the label you submitted

• After the specialist proposes the changes, the status is Conditionally Approved
COLAs Online
Conditionally Approved Status (Cont.)

• You must review the proposed changes and then either **accept** them, which results in immediate approval of the COLA, or **decline** them, in which case you can make any necessary changes yourself and return.

• Which application fields are involved?
  – Brand name
  – Fanciful name
Can I Change My Approved Label Without Getting a New COLA?

• Review [List of Allowable COLA Revisions](#)
  – Once a label receives TTB approval, you can make certain changes to that label without obtaining a new COLA
  – Any revisions you make to your approved labels must be in compliance with the applicable regulations

• You must be able to identify the COLA you are relying on to bottle a malt beverage in the event that TTB asks you to provide evidence that the label is covered by a COLA
Mandatory Label Information
# Mandatory Label Information

The following label information is mandatory:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand name</td>
<td>(27 CFR 7.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol content*</td>
<td>(27 CFR 7.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name and address</td>
<td>(27 CFR 7.66-7.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin (Imported)</td>
<td>(27 CFR 7.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net contents</td>
<td>(27 CFR 7.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>(27 CFR 7.141-7.147)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Health Warning</td>
<td>(27 CFR 16.21-22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingredient Declarations (if used):</td>
<td>(27 CFR 7.63)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Aspartame
- FD&C yellow #5
- Sulfites
- Cochineal extract or carmine

*If required by 27 CFR 7.63(a)(3)*
Mandatory Label Information
General Requirements

- Must be readily legible under ordinary conditions, and must appear on a contrasting background
- Other than the brand name, must be in English, with exceptions for malt beverages bottled for consumption in Puerto Rico
- For information about type size requirements, refer to
  - 27 CFR 7.53 or
  - TTB Malt Beverage BAM (Beverage Alcohol Manual)
Mandatory Label Information:
1) Brand Name
2) Name and Address
3) Class/Type
4) Net Contents
5) Government Warning
6) Alcohol Content (Optional)
Mandatory Label Information

Brand Name

• Name under which the malt beverage is marketed
• If you do not identify a brand name, then the name of the bottler or importer is considered the brand name
• Common Mistakes:
  – Brand name on the label is not correctly entered on the application
  – Class/type is entered in the brand name field on the application
    • Example:

    ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO TAX AND TRADE BUREAU (TTB)

20 CFR 7.64
Mandatory Label Information
Name and Address

- City and State of bottler
- Trade name or DBA (doing business as) is allowed
- Principal place of business of the producing brewer may be used in lieu of listing all brewing locations when owning multiple brewing locations
- The place of bottling may also appear in a listing of all breweries owned by the bottler, if the place of bottling is not given less emphasis and the coding requirements of 27 CFR 25.141 and 25.142 are met.
Name and Address | Common Mistakes

- Name and address are missing from the label
- City and State on label do not match the address on the Brewer’s Notice
- Contract brewer/producer has not added the contractee’s DBA/trade name to their Brewer’s Notice
- Label contains name and address of the contractee and not the contract brewer/producer
Mandatory Label Information

Net Contents

- Must use English units of measure (fluid ounces, pints, quarts, gallons)
- May show both metric and English units on the label
  - 1 pint 9.4 fl. oz. (750 mL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS OF CONTAINER</th>
<th>NET CONTENTS MUST BE SHOWN IN…</th>
<th>CONTAINER SIZE</th>
<th>LABEL NET CONTENTS STATEMENT MUST BE…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 pint</td>
<td>Fluid ounces or fractions of a pint</td>
<td>8 ounces</td>
<td>8 fluid ounces (fl. oz.) or ½ pint (pt.) or 0.5 pint (pt.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pint</td>
<td>Pints</td>
<td>16 ounces</td>
<td>1 pint (pt.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 pint but less than 1 quart</td>
<td>Pints and fluid ounces or fractions of a quart</td>
<td>20 ounces</td>
<td>1 pint (pt.), 4 fluid ounces (fl. oz.) or 5/8 quart (qt.) or 0.63 quart (qt.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 quart</td>
<td>Quarts</td>
<td>32 ounces</td>
<td>1 quart (qt.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 quart but less than 1 gallon</td>
<td>Quarts, pints and fluid ounces or fractions of a gallon</td>
<td>60 ounces</td>
<td>1 quart (qt.), 1 pint (pt.), 12 fluid ounces (fl. oz.) or 15/32 gallon (gal.) or 0.47 gallon (gal.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 gallon</td>
<td>Gallons</td>
<td>128 ounces</td>
<td>1 gallon (gal.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 gallon</td>
<td>Gallons and fractions of gallons</td>
<td>166 ounces</td>
<td>1 ¼ gallons (gals.) or 1.25 gallons (gals.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 CFR 7.70
Net Contents | Common Mistakes

- Stating just **oz.** instead of **fl. oz.**
- Stating **16 fl. oz.** instead of **1 pint** (may list both)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptable Formats:</th>
<th>Needs Correction:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Pint</td>
<td>16 OZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Pint (473 mL)</td>
<td>16 FL OZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>473 mL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Not converting measurements into pints and fluid ounces (22 fl. oz. vs. 1 pint 6 fl. oz.)
- Showing only metric units (750 mL)
Mandatory Label Information

Alcohol Content

- **Alcohol By Volume:**
  - Mandatory if any alcohol is derived from added flavors or other added nonbeverage ingredients (other than hops extract) containing alcohol
  - Otherwise, it is optional (unless required by state law)

- **Alcohol By Weight:**
  - You may optionally include alcohol by weight together with the statement of alcohol by volume

### Approved Formats:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alcohol By Volume:</th>
<th>Alcohol By Weight:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol (ALC) ___% by Volume (VOL)</td>
<td>Alcohol (ALC) ___% by Weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol (ALC) by Volume (VOL) ___%</td>
<td>Alcohol (ALC) by Weight ___%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___% Alcohol (ALC) by Volume (VOL)</td>
<td>___% Alcohol (ALC) by Weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___% Alcohol (ALC)/Volume (VOL)</td>
<td>___% Alcohol (ALC) / Weight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 CFR 7.65
Alcohol Content | Common Mistakes

• Using an incorrect format
  – **ABV** and **ABW** are not permitted - you must spell out the words or use the abbreviations allowed by 27 CFR 7.65(b)(4)
    Example:  
  
  • Leaving off part of the phrase or the percent symbol (%)
  • Not listing alcohol content on the label for products that contain added alcohol from a flavor
Mandatory Label Information

Health Warning Statement

- Must be readily legible under ordinary conditions and on a contrasting background
- Must be separate and apart from all other label text
- The words **GOVERNMENT WARNING** must appear in capital letters and bold type

**GOVERNMENT WARNING:** (1) According to the Surgeon General, women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy because of the risk of birth defects. (2) Consumption of alcoholic beverages impairs your ability to drive a car or operate machinery, and may cause health problems.

27 CFR part 16
Mandatory Label Information
Class and Type - General

• The specific identity of a malt beverage
• The designation of malt beverages is based on trade understandings of the characteristics generally attributed to the particular malt beverage
  – Ale, Beer, Malt Liquor, Stout, and Porter are all acceptable as the class designation of a malt beverage
IPA is not sufficient as a class/type statement. Ale or India Pale Ale must appear on the brand label.

Dunkelweizen and styles, such as Hefeweizen, Bock, Tripel, Bier, etc. are not sufficient class designations in and of themselves, and need to be further qualified by adding Ale, Beer etc. afterwards.

The class designation (ale, stout, etc.) is missing. [Beer with a colon is considered a heading, and not a class/type.]
Mandatory Label Information
Class and Type – Malt Beverage Specialty Products

• Products not known to the trade under a particular designation are commonly called **malt beverage specialty products**

• MB specialty products generally require formula approval prior to applying for label approval, unless they have been specifically exempted from formula approval
Mandatory Label Information
Class and Type – Formulated Specialty Products

• If formula approval is required, the product must be labeled with a distinctive or fanciful name, together with an adequate and truthful statement of the composition.

Hazelnut Porter – Porter Brewed with Hazelnuts

Fanciful name  Statement of Composition

27 CFR 7.147
MB Specialties that Require Formulas | Common Mistakes

- Fanciful name is missing on the label and/or application
- Statement of composition does not accurately reflect the flavoring materials in the product as per the formula
- Statement of composition is missing the base beer
  - For example, Made with Vanilla Extract vs. Ale with Vanilla Extract
The fanciful name is missing. On formulated malt beverages, a fanciful name is required to appear.

The label must have a statement of composition that identifies the products class and type, which is currently missing. A designation does not satisfy this requirement because the product is formulated.
### Mandatory Information

#### Class and Type – Formula Exempt MB Products

- Specific malt beverage ingredients and processes are exempt from formulas under [TTB Ruling 2015-1](https://www.ttb.treasury.gov/taxstats/ttb_rulings/ttb-ruling-2015-1.html).
- The process of aging beer is exempt, however DS or wine barrels, woodchips, or staves must have no discernible quantity of spirits or wine.

#### Labeling Requirements:
- Class/type may be stated as **either a Designation or Statement of Composition**.
- Fanciful Names are not required.
- Aging of a product does not need to be called out as part of the class/type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flavoring Ingredient used:</th>
<th>Raspberry puree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is a formula required?</td>
<td>NO (exempt under 2015-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labeling options:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• in accordance with trade understanding</td>
<td>Fruit Ale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Statement of Composition</td>
<td>Raspberry Ale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ale with Natural Flavor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ale with Raspberries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 2015-1 Examples of Designations – Attachment 2

### Examples of Adequate and Inadequate Designations in Accordance with Trade Understanding

| Description of product | Examples of statements of composition that will continue to be allowed as designations in accordance with trade understanding under this ruling. | Examples of adequate designations in accordance with trade understanding. | Examples of inadequate and misleading designations.*
---|---|---|---
| Beer brewed with cherry juice | • Beer brewed with cherry juice  
  • Malt beverage fermented with natural flavor  
  *(Kriek may be added as optional additional information.)* | • Fruit beer  
  • Cherry beer  
  *(Kriek may be added as optional additional information.)* | • Cherry delight  
  • Kriek  
  • Bob’s Beer  
  • Beer  
  • Malt beverage |
| Beer with cherry juice added after fermentation | • Beer flavored with cherry juice  
  • Malt beverage with natural flavor added  
  *(Kriek may be added as optional additional information.)* | • Fruit beer  
  • Cherry beer  
  *(Kriek may be added as optional additional information.)* | • Cherry delight  
  • Kriek  
  • Bob’s Beer  
  *Misleading designation:  
  • Beer brewed with cherry juice* |
This label does not have a class and type statement or designation in accordance with TTB Ruling 2015-1.

Examples of acceptable designations/statement of composition:

- Ale with Raspberries
  - Fruity & Fresh
- Fruit Ale
  - Raspberry Puree
- Raspberry Ale

Image from canva.com/templates/labels
MB Products Exempt from Formulas | Common Mistakes

• Product ingredients are not sufficiently conveyed by the style’s name, for example, as *gose* or *wit*
• Statement of composition or designation is missing
• Class designation of base product is missing in the statement of composition

Acceptable: 🌈 Ale with Blueberries

Needs Correction: 😞 Made with Blueberries
Geographical Names
Class and Type

• Geographical names for distinctive types of malt beverages shall not be applied to malt beverages produced in any place other than the particular region indicated by the name unless qualified with text such as **STYLE** or **PRODUCT OF THE USA** or other text to indicate the true place of production.

• Common Mistakes
  – **India Pale Lager** or **India Session Ale** appearing without qualifiers (such as **Style** or **Product of USA**).
  – **Product of the USA** does not appear in direct conjunction with the geographically significant reference (text or imagery).

27 CFR 7.146
### Geographical Names of Distinctive Types

#### Class and Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names that have lost geographic significance (no qualifier required)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• India Pale Ale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Baltic Porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bohemian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Russian Imperial Stout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Imperial Russian Stout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scotch Ale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scottish Ale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of names that still have geographic significance* (qualifier required)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Belgian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Berliner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kolsch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vienna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• West Coast (or similar)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not a Complete List
Unlike India Pale Ale, India Pale Lager has not lost its geographic significance.

Geographically significant malt beverage styles produced in a country other than the one indicated must be properly qualified with style or a phrase such as Product of USA.
Keg Collars
Kegs

• Kegs are consumer containers, just like bottles or cans
• When a COLA is required, mandatory labeling requirements must be met
• Labels bearing mandatory information may include:
  – Keg caps
  – Collars
  – Stickers
  – Combination of formats
• Information can be handwritten on the label
  – Except for GOVERNMENT WARNING
• Generally, keg labels must be firmly affixed such that they can’t be removed without the application of water or other solvents
• For kegs with a capacity of at least 5.16 gallons:
  – labels are also considered firmly affixed when they would be broken or otherwise rendered not reusable upon removal
  – labels need not be firmly affixed if the name of the bottler or importer is permanently or semi-permanently stated on the keg (i.e., via embossing, engraving, stamping, or a sticker or ink jet printing)
• Note: there is no exception for firmly affixing the GOVERNMENT WARNING

27 CFR 7.51 and 7.61(a)(5)
The Government Health Warning is not compliant. The S and G in Surgeon General must be capitalized. Also, a comma must appear after General and machinery.

The alcohol content cannot be left blank and must be listed in the identified section. However, it is an allowable revision post approval.

Irish is geographically significant and must be further qualified (e.g., Irish-Style). Cream and Wit are missing the Class/Type designation at the end.

When multiple class and type designations are present on keg labels, you are required to designate the product to which the application applies.
Prohibited Labeling Practices
Examples of Things Prohibited from Appearing on Malt Beverage Labels

- Any statement that is false or untrue
- Any statement ... relating to any guarantee (except money-back guarantees are permitted)
- Any misleading information, such as:
  - Text that implies that the product is a distilled spirit or contains a distilled spirit (with certain exceptions)
  - Misleading health-related claims
  - Implied government endorsements

27 CFR 7.102, 7.123, and 7.126-7.130
Optional Label
Claims
Commonly Used Optional Information

Rulings of Interest:
• 2004-1 Caloric and Carbohydrate Representations
• 2020-2 Gluten Content Statements
• 2013-2 Voluntary Nutrient Content Statements

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) of Interest:
• FAQs on TTB Ruling 2013-2 (Serving Facts Statements)
• FAQs on Sugar Content Statements
• FAQs on Major Food Allergen Labeling
• FAQs on Organic Labeling
• FAQs on Alcohol
• FAQ [AF3]: How do I calculate the number of servings per container?
# Labeling Resources

## Beer Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TTB Beer Rulings</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ttb.gov/beer/rulings">www.ttb.gov/beer/rulings</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTB Beer Industry Circulars</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ttb.gov/beer/industry-circulars">www.ttb.gov/beer/industry-circulars</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I Need a Formula? Tool</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ttb.gov/formulation/mbev">www.ttb.gov/formulation/mbev</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTB Beer Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ttb.gov/beer/beer-faqs">www.ttb.gov/beer/beer-faqs</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTB G 2016-1A –Beer/Malt Beverages Requiring Formula Approval or Laboratory Sample Analysis Chart</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ttb.gov/public-guidance/1tb-g-2016-1a">www.ttb.gov/public-guidance/1tb-g-2016-1a</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowable Revisions to Approved Labels</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ttb.gov/labeling/allowable-revisions">www.ttb.gov/labeling/allowable-revisions</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions?

Contact the Alcohol Labeling and Formulation Division at:

- Toll Free at 866-927-ALFD (2533), OR
- Use our Alcohol Labeling and Formulation Division (ALFD) Contact Form

Representatives are Available:
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET Monday - Friday (except on federal holidays)