

COMPLIANCE MATTERS

94-3

"CUSTOMER SERVICE" *IT'S MORE THAN JUST A LABEL*

WHO WE ARE

The Labeling Section, Product Compliance Branch, is the office within the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) responsible for approving certificates of label approval for alcoholic beverages. In 1993, our staff of 8 Label Specialists reviewed approximately 59,000 applications and issued over 43,000 certificates. These certificates help us to ensure that two basic objectives are met:

1. The consumer receives a product that is safe, legal and properly described.
2. All alcoholic beverages are taxed at the proper rate.

WHO USES OUR SERVICES?

Domestic and foreign bottlers of alcoholic beverages

Domestic and foreign producers of alcoholic beverages

Domestic wholesalers of alcoholic beverages

Importers of alcoholic beverages

Representatives of the alcoholic beverage industry

WHAT ARE OUR SERVICES?

Our core services are:

- Reviewing formal label applications
- Issuing label certificates
- Commenting on proposed (informal) labels for alcoholic beverages
- Responding to questions on labeling and packaging of all alcoholic beverages, both domestic and imported
- Providing guidance on new product development
- Publish updates quarterly on procedures, policies and problems
- Offer these updates on INTERNET. The INTERNET domain address is ATF.USTREAS.GOV. If you have any questions, please contract Michael Breen, Information & Management Services Section at (202) 927-7830.

OUR STANDARDS

You have a right to expect from us a service which is professional and courteous and which actively responds to your market strategies. Although we sometimes make mistakes, we continuously try to perfect our service. We want to offer you the best service possible. To help us do this, we have developed certain performance standards that we are committed to meet.

We will be

COURTEOUS	All our employees will treat you with respect.
PROFESSIONAL	Our Label Specialists are trained in a full range of services to meet your needs.
CONFIDENTIAL	Your proprietary information will be protected at all times.

You can expect us to:

- Approve or reject your formal label application within 9 calendar days of receipt. You will be notified by phone, fax or in writing if the processing will exceed 9 calendar days.
- Comment on proposed (informal) labels within 15 calendar days. You will be notified by phone, fax or in writing if for any reason we can only send a partial reply. We will tell you how long it will be before we can fully answer your questions.

If you visit our Labeling Section, we are located at:

650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Room 5200
Washington, DC 20226

(Our building is approximately 2 blocks north of the Gallery Place Metro Station, 7th & H Street exit. There are parking garages and parking meters nearby.)

- Our hours of operation are Monday-Friday, except Federal Holidays, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM, Eastern Time (ET).
- A clerk will assist you, usually within 5 minutes.
- If you need to speak directly to the Label Specialist processing your label, you may use the intercom phone system and posted numbers to contact that Specialist.

If you phone us:

- You can reach us at (202) 927-8140
- We are available by telephone Monday – Friday, except Federal Holidays, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM, ET.

You may schedule an appointment to meet with a Label Specialist.

LISTENING TO YOU

We will establish a complaint system which we will use to address your concerns. We will monitor your complaint from its inception to its resolution and use this process to improve our service to you. In addition, we will conduct periodic surveys to determine how well you think we are meeting our goals and your expectations. We will evaluate our performance against established standards with the purpose of continuously upgrading and improving the services we provide you.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR SERVICE

Certificates of label approval (COLAs) on INTERNET

We hope to provide access to the COLA database to all INTERNET users. The database will contain information on all COLA's approved since July, 1979.

CD (imaged) COLA's

We have begun to use CD ROM as a medium to store COLA's. This system will provide high quality black and white electronic images of your approved labels.

New Tracking System

Our COLA Modernization Program will enable us to monitor each stage of the processing of your labels and correspondence. In addition, it will help us to identify any stages in the process that require attention.

INFORMATION

Suggestions, Comments and Complaints:

Based on our goal of continuous improvement, we welcome your candid comments, suggestions and complaints. This information assists us in improving the service we provide to you.

We may be reached at:

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Product Compliance Branch
650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20226

Phone: (202) 927-8140 FAX: (202) 927-8605

Status:

Information on the status of your formal label application, proposed (informal) labels and correspondence may be obtained from the Label Specialist assigned to your company.

Issued September 1994
Lloyd Bentsen, Secretary of the Treasury

This was last updated on August 25, 1998