

Easing of alcohol sales restrictions a welcome relief for industry

In his [national address last night](#), President Cyril Ramaphosa announced an easing of some lockdown restrictions, including the hours when alcohol can be sold by liquor stores.



Liquor trading returns to pre-lockdown hours, with bottle stores and other retailers now able to sell liquor for off-site consumption over the weekend and during all licensed trading hours. Since the start of Level 1 on 21 September, licensed outlets have only been allowed to sell alcohol for home consumption on weekdays from 9am to 5pm.

The latest gazette states that the sale of liquor is now permitted:

- By licensed premises for off-site consumption, is permitted during licensed trading hours – subject to the laws governing such licenses;
- By a licensed premises for on-site consumption is permitted, subject to strict adherence to the curfew.

The amendment to the regulations is effective from today, 12 November 2020.



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12 Nov 2020



The alcohol industry has welcomed the normalisation of liquor trading hours, and said it's committed to partnering with Government to save businesses and jobs in the sector while ensuring safety, responsible trading, and the sensible consumption of alcohol during the joint effort to fight against the pandemic and to begin to rebuild the economy.

Kurt Moore, CEO of the South African Liquor Brandowners Association (SALBA), said, "The alcohol industry acknowledges the challenges facing the Government in its efforts to stem the pandemic and prevent the possibility of a second wave of infections. We welcome the President's stated goal to save lives and protect livelihoods through focusing on restoring, recovering and rebuilding the economy."

Moore said the industry is working across the value chain to ensure the sector can begin to rebuild and to make its valuable contribution to the revival of the country's economy.

"This move comes as a welcome relief to our sector which is endeavouring to recover from the two waves of bans on formal sales of alcohol during the lockdown," he added.



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21 Aug 2020



Rico Basson, managing director of Vinpro, said the normalisation of trading hours would help in the wine sector's recovery. "The wine industry welcomes the fact that both on-consumption and off-consumption sales are now permitted," he said.

"Wine sales at cellar door make up a large portion of their revenue and the resumption of normal trade, especially now the tourism season is approaching, is critical. The survival of the wine industry and wine tourism is essential for economic recovery, including 290,000 employment opportunities, but also for the cultural heritage it brings to brand South Africa," Basson added.

Patricia Pillay, CEO of the Beer Association of South Africa (Basa), commented. "Beer is the biggest category of SA alcohol and a major contributor to the country's economy and as Basa we are committed to supporting the president's rapid economic growth plan. We are also going to continue to work with social partners in curbing the harmful use of alcohol. We encourage all consumers to drink in moderation and also explore no and low alcohol products that have been introduced into the market."

According to Basa, as a result of continued lockdown restrictions, 15% of craft breweries have been forced to close down over the past few months. Many breweries that have managed to stay open have been forced to retrench staff, resulting in hundreds of job losses across the sector.



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Lucky Ntimane, convener of the Coalition of Liquor Traders, welcomed the decision. "Our network of some 34,000 taverners across the country welcomes the lifting of trading restrictions which will substantially ease the heavy economic stress the sector has been under. We have been working tirelessly to ensure traders comply with Covid-19 protocols and have been vocal in condemning irresponsible behaviour to prevent a second wave of infections."

Moore added, "The liquor industry remains committed to continuing to work closely with the Government and traders to ensure compliance with the gazetted provisions. These rules include making sure that outlets do not allow in patrons at more than 50% of the capacity of the venue. They need to insist on wearing facemasks and obeying the curfew.

"We continue to call on the traders and consumers alike to abide by all the lockdown rules and make sure that the drinking occasions do not contribute to the spread of infections and unnecessary burden on the health system."

The industry urges consumers to call the Consumer Goods Council hotline on 0800 014 856 to report any violation of the regulations.

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