

Webinar question responses

Alcohol Policy Review: opportunities for Ontario municipalities

Q1: Is there an evidence based distance for optimal outlet density?

Response: We did not come across any studies or guidance documents that provided evidence for a specific separation distance for optimal outlet density. Conversation with municipalities indicated that they tend to set distances based on local contextual factors. You may want to check out the OPHA Issue Series document on Alcohol Outlet Density which includes one review that speaks to density thresholds: <http://www.opho.on.ca/getmedia/c2604def-2f49-428f-832f-4bb17bf07504/Alcohol-Outlet-Density.pdf.aspx>

Q2: Are there limits on marketing for alcohol for post secondary establishments?

Response: post-secondary policies were not within the scope of the project. We were looking at policies that were municipally focused. That said, we are not aware of any regulations that place limits on marketing for post-secondary education establishments. Municipalities in Ontario do not have the authority to establish policies for facilities owned by other public sector organizations. Negotiations would be needed between the municipality and post-secondary institutions to establish policies, where appropriate. Here are some resources related to alcohol on postsecondary campuses:

- PHO Webinar about Carleton University's Alcohol Awareness Strategy: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/LearningAndDevelopment/Events/Documents/Campus%20Alcohol%20Policy%20Dec%202014%202015.pdf>
- Post-secondary education partnership – alcohol harms: <http://pepah.ca/home/>, and <http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/CCSA-Postsecondary-Education-Partnership-Alcohol-Harms-Backgrounder-2016-en.pdf>

Q3: Looking across the policy areas that you discussed, which are the top three recommendations that are most likely to be feasible to implement in a year or two?

Response: Timing plays a big factor in determining the types of policies and actions that municipalities can pursue over the next two years. For example, this is dependent upon whether a municipality is undertaking a retail or commercial land needs study, reviewing their Official Plan, Zoning By-Law, Municipal Alcohol Policy review, or undergoing a review of business licenses practices. It is recommended that public health departments engage municipalities to better understand municipal reviews and studies that they may be undertaking so that health units are appropriately engaged to bring forth specific interests. We recommend that public health approach municipalities in the meantime to lend support where needed. Communications should be issue specific in outlining why further policies and actions will need to be explored, and that is specific to the local or neighbourhood issues or trends exist.

Q4: Has there been any precedent in regards to banning alcohol outlets near sensitive lands (such as schools, daycares etc.).

Response: All the detailed policies regarding separation distances in places like Edmonton, Calgary are discussed in [the report](#).

Q5: Does anyone have any experience working with their municipalities that do not license businesses,? (our municipalities do not)

Response: Municipalities can pass specific by-laws with restrictions for specific businesses to protect public interest and nuisances. By-laws will need to be Council approved. The City of St. Thomas for example does not require businesses to attain licenses to operate within their municipality, but have passed specific by-laws imposing conditions or requiring licenses for specific types of business activities. See: <http://stthomas.ca/content/business-licenses-registration>