



Retail Enforcement

WSLCB Retail enforcement officers ensure state liquor laws and regulations are being followed at liquor-licensed businesses that sell and serve alcohol for on-and-off premises consumption, such as restaurants, grocery stores, nightclubs and taverns.



Visits by WSLCB enforcement officers

Generally, officers visit locations based on area needs, which are determined by licensing activities, requests for education and technical assistance, complaints from the public or law enforcement, police referral, WSLCB violation history, and DUI information. Also, if an officer is visiting a specific business, he or she will often stop in at nearby businesses at the same time.

Examples of when an officer might visit a business:

- **A compliance check:** An investigative aide aged 18 to 20 attempts to purchase liquor or tobacco using their real ID. These aides are accompanied by WSLCB officers.
- **A premises check:** An officer answers questions, offers training, discusses issues, makes sure



proper signs are displayed, etc.

- **A complaint investigation:** A complaint is an allegation that a business violated state liquor or tobacco laws. A complaint may come from a customer, law enforcement officer, employee, etc.

Generally, the WSLCB officer will notify the business of the allegation and conduct an investigation into the facts, which could include interviews with staff or a review of security tapes. The officer will normally perform two unannounced follow-up checks at the business. The business could receive a verbal or written warning, or an administrative violation notice if the officer is able to verify a violation occurred or finds it is still occurring. The officer may also close the complaint as unfounded. Having an unfounded complaint on your record does not negatively impact your violation history.

- **An undercover operation:** Officers visit a business unannounced in order to observe the business and watch for violations. A second team of officers may be in place to assist. The operations are typically carried out based on DUI history, complaints, and police referrals.
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