

Alcohol Policy: Opportunities for Ontario Municipalities

Municipalities regularly face **alcohol-related** issues. From nuisance, to violence, to public safety concerns, municipalities devote time and resources to dealing with alcohol. Municipal level policies can make a real difference when it comes to **decreasing** local alcohol-related harms and related costs.

Did You Know?



Alcohol use is one of the three leading **risk factors** for global disease burden.

Alcohol **policies** are an important part of reducing local alcohol-related harms.



Policies and strategies are needed at **all levels** of government to reduce alcohol-related harms.



There are numerous **resources** supporting Municipal Alcohol Policy development, a long-standing policy approach that manages alcohol risk and harm on municipally-owned properties.

Effective policy interventions to reduce alcohol harms at the local level are within reach. The findings and recommendations offered in the **“Alcohol Policy Review: Opportunities for Ontario Municipalities”** report can support municipal leaders in their policy development efforts toward healthier communities.

	Municipalities Can:
Licensing and Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and/or revise municipal by-laws that strengthen the protection of public safety and property standards. Establish business license conditions through a municipal by-law on the basis of protecting public interests and minimizing nuisances. Create a new business license category that includes supermarket retailers licensed to sell alcohol. Work with Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario and police to protect public interest. Develop conditions for liquor license establishments addressing municipal jurisdictional matters (e.g., signage with contact information for public complaints, restricting patio hours of operation, restricting amplified music in outdoor spaces, installing security cameras, and ensuring the enclosure of garbage receptacles).
Regulating Physical Access through Density and Location Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update municipal zoning by-laws to establish a minimum floor area requirement that is greater than the provincial requirement for a grocery store to allow the sale of wine, beer, or cider. Develop minimum separation distances between liquor license establishments. Investigate the need for site specific zoning to limit the location of alcohol retailers and liquor licensed establishments.
Hours of Sale Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipalities that are interested in restricting hours of sale/service should issue site specific conditions when warranted and where applicable.
Pricing Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy efforts to strengthen provincial regulations in controlling access to and affordability of alcohol. Explore the development of minimum pricing standards for alcoholic beverages as a condition of a business license application, where warranted.
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop policies that prohibit the promotion or sale of alcoholic beverages on municipally owned lands or facilities, including public transit and associated amenities. Participate in local economic development initiatives with local business improvement areas and hospitality businesses to encourage responsible alcohol consumption.
Surveillance and Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with public health units to undertake monitoring and surveillance efforts to describe local alcohol availability and alcohol-related harms.



“Policy controls strive to achieve a balance between business and economic interests, as well as the health and safety of the population.”
Ontario Public Health Association



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public health nurses can work with your municipality to reduce alcohol-related harms at the local level. For more information, please visit durham.ca/alcohol



If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.