

YOUR FREEDOM TO BUSINESS LICENSING



LICENTIA FRANCHISE SA PTY LTD - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Useful information to help you understand Retail Liquor Licensing in South Africa

Here are 5 key facts you need to know about applying for a Retail Liquor License:

1. There are two main types of Retail Liquor Licenses: on-consumption (e.g. taverns, restaurants) and off-consumption (e.g. bottle stores). Make sure you apply for the correct one.
2. Zoning is not optional. Your business premises must be zoned for liquor use or have a valid land use consent letter.
3. Advertising your intention to apply in two local newspapers is a legal requirement—Licentia handles this step for you.
4. SAP clearance is mandatory for all applicants and sometimes even for co-applicants or partners listed in the business.
5. Most provinces no longer accept affidavits in place of zoning documents—this law has changed. Ask Licentia to verify your zoning status before applying.

PLEASE BE ADVISED

Retail Liquor Licensing is governed by your provincial Liquor Act and municipal bylaws. Requirements may vary by province. Any incomplete or incorrect documentation may delay or disqualify your application.

Licentia Franchise SA is a professional licensing firm—we assist with admin, guidance, and tracking, but we are not SAPS, zoning officials, or land use planners. We ensure your application meets compliance requirements and give you the best possible chance at success.

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REAL SUCCESS. REAL CLIENTS.



MPUMALANGA

89% approval rate

GAUTENG

92% approval rate for retail liquor licenses submitted through Licentia in 2024

KWAZULU-NATAL

85% approval rate

Licentia outperforms national averages by submitting compliant, fast-tracked applications tailored to each province's requirements.

What's the difference between on- and off-consumption licenses?

On-consumption: Alcohol is consumed on the premises (e.g., taverns, restaurants). Off-consumption: Alcohol is sold to take away and consumed elsewhere (e.g., bottle stores). If you offer both, apply for a combined license.

Can I transfer an existing liquor license?

Yes, but it's not automatic. Transfers require new documentation, a clean SAPS record, and a zoning check. The Liquor Authority must approve the new applicant and property status.

What causes most applications to be delayed?

The top reasons are:

- Incomplete paperwork
- Missing zoning documentation
- SAPS delays
- Incorrect advertising formats
- Licentia helps avoid these pitfalls by reviewing your entire submission before it reaches the board.

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More Licensing FAQs

What happens after my application is submitted?

Once submitted, the Liquor Board will review your documents, verify zoning, and check SAPS, verification. If everything is in order, an inspector may visit your premises before approval is granted.

Do I need to publish a newspaper notice?

Yes. It's legally required to publish a notice of your intention to apply in two local newspapers—one in English and one in another official language. This is part of the public objection process.

DID YOU KNOW?

If a valid objection is submitted during the public notice period, it can delay or even block your Retail Liquor License.

Tip: Ensure your neighbors and local councillors are informed early. Licentia can help you prepare community-facing communication to avoid misunderstandings or objections.

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Step-by-step: The Renewal Process for Retail Liquor Licenses



1. Check your license expiry date – Licenses typically expire 12 months after issue.
2. Confirm conditions – Ensure all conditions attached to your license have been met (trading hours, signage, etc.).
3. Gather your renewal documents – See required items below.
4. Submit payment – Your annual renewal fee must be paid before the deadline.
5. Request a renewal confirmation – Proof of submission and payment may be requested by inspectors.
6. Avoid late submissions – Renewals submitted after the due date may result in penalties or cancellation.
7. Track your renewal status – Licentia assists in follow-up and confirmation with the Liquor Authority.

WHAT DOCUMENTS IS REQUIRED?

- Copy of your original liquor license
- Proof of renewal payment (receipt or deposit slip)
- Certified ID of license holder
- Recent municipal account or lease confirmation
- Zoning certificate (only if required by your provincial board)
- Any notices or inspection reports (if previously issued)
- Letter from landlord confirming continued use (if applicable)

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Need help or ready to apply?

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