

# Guidance for the Responsible Retailing of alcohol in England and Wales



**The Wine and Spirit Trade Association  
United Kingdom  
2014 > Ongoing  
#AwarenessRaising #On-trade  
#StaffTraining**



## Objective

To help encourage and promote the highest standards in alcohol retail.

## Description

This Guidance for the Responsible Retailing of Alcohol in England and Wales builds on the success of schemes to prevent underage sales introduced by the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group. The group continues to work on ways to prevent underage sales and underage drinking, whilst also promoting high standards among alcohol retailers.

### Face-to-face Sales

- In December 2014 RASG published guidance on the responsible retail of alcohol in England and Wales. The guidance was the result of unprecedented collaboration between retailers and looks to establish standards for alcohol retailing for the first time. In 2017 the guidance was updated and enhanced by the Group to include best practice and case studies. Guidance for Northern Ireland and Scotland were also published for the first time.
- It reflects changing priorities of the Group, to begin focusing on the broader aspects of alcohol retail. It is the first of its kind and establishes a high level of standards for retailers to operate to. It covers all aspects of alcohol retailing, including the legal and

self-regulatory frameworks in which retailers operate, as well as voluntary measures they have agreed to undertake.

- It is adopted by the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group retailers on a voluntary basis and is to be self-regulated by individual retailers.
- In 2020, at the start of the COVID-19 global pandemic RASG identified the likely impact this disease would have on retailers' abilities to fully comply with their licensing conditions. They drafted a guide, aimed at local authority licensing departments in England and Wales, setting out the likely areas of compliance that the virus would impact, along with specific asks from the retail sector and advice to local authorities. This draft guide was sent to the Home Office with a request to publish it as official guidance, applicable during the pandemic. As a result of this work, Kit Malthouse MP, Minister of State for Crime and Policing, sent a letter to all authorities in England and Wales setting out key areas where licensing authorities should consider adopting a pragmatic and flexible approach to enforcement during the pandemic. At the same time, RASG created a branded poster on its website, available to all, reminding customers they may be asked to remove their face coverings for the purpose of checking ID when buying age restricted goods.

### Online Sales and Home Delivery

- On-line sales of alcohol in the UK are governed by the same rules as face-to-face sales of alcohol. In 2019 membership of RASG was extended to include specialist alcohol on-line retailers. On-line sales and home delivery are a significant feature of the UK market, offering consumers convenience and choice about when and where they receive their goods. The UK on-line sales market is mature and has expanded rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Determining someone's age is easier when the sale takes place face to face rather than remotely. RASG members employ a combination of actions at key customer "touch points", which have developed over time and which are specific to the UK retail market. RASG has developed free guidance to support online alcohol retailers to build best practice within their own organisation and to help them remain compliant when selling online - no matter their business model, size or their resources.
- As ever this guidance will evolve as best practices change and technology allows online retailers to be more agile in their approach.

## Partners

A joint action by the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group:

Aldi UK and Ireland

Association of Convenience Stores

The Co-operative

Home Bargains

Lidl UK GmbH

Marks and Spencer PLC

Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd

Spar (UK) Limited  
Tesco Stores Limited  
Waitrose  
The Wine and Spirit Trade Association  
WM Morrison Supermarkets PLC

## Results

Retailers will take sufficient measures to follow this Guidance in all of their stores in England and Wales. The RASG retailers will also support all non-RASG retailers that wish to follow the Guidance.

Members of RASG represent more than 92% of the UK's supermarket chains and their guidance is used by many independent stores and smaller chains also.

## Website

<http://rasg.org.uk/guidance/>

## Downloads

## Photo gallery



## Documents

- 2021 Online Sales Guide** (pdf - 0.66 Mo)
- RASG Guidance England.pdf** (pdf - 4.13 Mo)
- RASG Guidance Scotland.pdf** (pdf - 3.05 Mo)
- RASG Guidance Northern Ireland.pdf** (pdf - 3.24 Mo)