Ontario Ministry of Finance

Wine and Wine Cooler Return Guide

Revised: July 2026

The information in this guide will help wine tax collectors **that do not own or operate any off-site winery retail stores** complete the Wine and Wine Cooler Return and Schedule to account for the Ontario wine basic tax collectable and payable for the reporting period. It also provides information about filing requirements, the supporting schedule, penalties, offences, and payment information for remitting the wine basic tax.

If you are a winery that owns and operates one or more off-site winery retail stores, this guide does not apply to you. Instead, refer to the **Wine and Wine Cooler Return – B Guide**.

For more information about how wine basic tax applies, go to the ministry's Wine Tax webpage.

The information in this guide does not replace the law found in the *Liquor Tax Act, 1996 (Act)*, *Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019*, and related regulations.

General Information

Who is Required to File This Return

Ontario wineries that own and operate on-site winery retail stores.

Wineries include other beverage alcohol manufacturers who make products that are considered to be wine or a wine cooler for the purpose of the wine basic tax.

File, Pay and View Your Wine and Wine Cooler Return Online

The Wine and Wine Cooler Return, which includes a supporting schedule, must be filed electronically using the Ministry of Finance's online filing service, ONT-TAXS online.

ONT-TAXS online is the ministry's secure, convenient and free online tax service. It saves time, reduces paper and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Getting started is fast and easy!

Visit ontario.ca/finance or call us at 1-866-ONT-TAXS (1-866-668-8297).

Filing and Payment Requirements

The Wine and Wine Cooler Return, which includes a supporting schedule, must be completed and filed for each reporting period even if you did not have any activity to report for that period.

The reporting period may be monthly or quarterly depending on your tax remittance over the previous calendar year.

The reporting period for wineries is generally monthly. However, wineries have the option to report on a quarterly basis if their total wine basic tax remittances over the previous calendar year were less than $15,000, or if the ministry determines that a winery's remittances over the calendar year are likely to be less than that amount (e.g., when a winery first starts selling wine from its winery retail store). Quarterly filers will report for the following periods:

- January through March
- April through June
- July through September
- October through December

The ministry will notify you of your winery's filing period when you receive your first return of the reporting year. Wineries that qualify and choose to file quarterly will remain quarterly filers for the full reporting year commencing July.

The return must be filed with the remittance of tax **on or before the 20th day of the month following the reporting period**.

The return for each reporting period will be available through ONT-TAXS online in the month before it is due.

When filing online, complete the return in the following order:

- Product Distribution for Ontario and non-Ontario wines (Schedule A)
- Tax Due Calculation (Wine and Wine Cooler Return)

The Tax Due Calculation section is automatically populated and calculated based on the information entered.

You must keep records to support all amounts reported on the return and schedules.

How to File Returns and Make Payments

Returns and schedules must be filed using ONT-TAXS online.

Alternative filing methods may be accepted, only in limited circumstances. If you require an alternative filing method, contact us at 1-866-ONT-TAXS (1-866-668-8297).

Online payments are encouraged; however, payments are also accepted:

- By mail to:

  Ministry of Finance
  33 King Street West
  PO Box 620
  Oshawa ON L1H 8E9

- At certain ServiceOntario locations on behalf of the ministry. For ServiceOntario Centre locations with tax services and their hours of operation and telephone numbers, visit https://www.ontario.ca/locations/serviceontario.

Print your Account or Business Number on the back of your cheque or money order. Your cheque or money order should be made payable to the "**Minister of Finance**".

Note: Payments cannot be made at financial institutions.

Penalties and Offences

Failure to File a Return by the return's due date may result in the assessment of a penalty equal to 10% of the tax collectable or 5% of the tax payable for the period covered by the return.

Failure to Remit Tax with Return may result in the assessment of a penalty equal to 10% of the tax collectable or 5% of the tax payable for the period covered by the return.

Failure to collect required tax may result in a penalty equal to 100% of the amount not collected. Where the failure is due to neglect, carelessness, wilful default or fraud, an additional penalty of 25% of the amount (minimum $100) may also apply.

Knowingly giving false information, altering records, or attempting to evade tax may result in fines starting at $500 or 25% of the tax owed (whichever is greater), up to $10,000 plus twice the tax owed, up to 2 years in jail, or both.

Account Number or Business Number

Your Account Number or Business Number is the unique number assigned by the ministry to your wine tax account and noted on your return.

Change of Information

Please notify the ministry of any changes to your business name, address, business structure or contact information. When contacting the ministry be sure to use your Account Number or Business Number.

Records Retention

To ensure the accurate determination of the tax collectable and payable under the Act, you are required to keep at your place of business or residence in Ontario:

- records and books of account in support of all entries on the return and schedules.
- every document which verifies the information in the records and books.

You must retain these items for a period of at least 7 years following the end of the fiscal year that relates to the record or the date of your last entry made in the book.

For more information regarding records retention, visit ontario.ca/recordretention.

For more information regarding audits, visit ontario.ca/taxaudit.

Certification

The authorized signing officer must confirm that the information provided in the return is, to the best of their knowledge, true, correct and complete before submitting the return.

Authorizing or Cancelling a Representative

You may authorize a third party (for example, an accountant or solicitor) to file your Wine and Wine Cooler Return and make payments on your behalf.

When filing using ONT-TAXS online, you may authorize a third party directly through the online service. This authorization allows the representative to access your account, file returns and make payments on your behalf, based on the access permissions you grant.

A third party can also be authorized by completing an Authorizing or Cancelling a Representative form and submitting it to the ministry before the return is filed.

Freedom of Information

Personal information collected within the Wine and Wine Cooler Return and schedule is collected under the authority of the *Liquor Tax Act, 1996*, and will be used for the purposes of the Act. Questions about the collection of this information should be directed to an agent with the ministry at 1-866-ONT-TAXS (1-866-668-8297) or in writing to:

Senior Manager, Account Management
Account Management and Collections Branch
Ministry of Finance
4th Floor, 33 King Street West
Oshawa ON L1H 8H5

Telephone: 1-866-ONT-TAXS (1-866-668-8297)

Enquiries

Address:
Ministry of Finance
Account Management and Collections Branch
33 King Street West
PO Box 625
Oshawa ON L1H 8H9

Website:
ontario.ca/finance

Toll free:
1-866-ONT-TAXS (1-866-668-8297)

Teletypewriter (TTY):
1-800-263-7776

Wine Tax-Related Terms and Definitions

To assist with the completion of the return and schedule, you may find it helpful to refer to the following wine tax-related terms and definitions.

Wine Basic Tax

Wine basic tax is the tax payable on wine and wine coolers pursuant to Part II of the *Liquor Tax Act, 1996*.

Wine basic tax is applied to the "retail price" of wine or wine coolers, as defined in the Act. The wine basic tax is not applicable to Ontario wine and wine coolers purchased from **on-site winery retail stores**.

The distribution of Ontario wine and wine coolers is reported separately on the return from non-Ontario wine and wine coolers due to the different tax applications.

Ontario Wine and Wine Cooler

Ontario wine and **Ontario wine cooler** have their own meaning under the *Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019* and *Liquor Tax Act, 1996* and may differ from what the wine industry may generally consider to be Ontario wine or Ontario wine cooler.

Ontario wine means wine produced from agricultural products grown in Ontario, and may include products grown outside of Ontario in the prescribed amounts (as set out in the *Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019*).

Ontario wine cooler is Ontario wine or a beverage containing Ontario wine that contains not more than 7 per cent alcohol by volume.

Off-site winery retail store

An **off-site winery retail store** is a winery retail store that is not located on the winery licensee's production site. This includes:

- a standalone off-site store, and

- wine boutiques located inside the shopping area of a grocery store with a shared checkout.

On-site winery retail store

An **on-site winery retail store** is a winery retail store that is located on the winery **licensee's production site**.

Ontario Deposit Program

The Ontario Deposit Return Program refers to the liquor container deposit program under the *Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019*. Deposit amounts are set out in Ontario Regulation 745/21 (General) under the *Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019*.

Final Purchase Price

For the purpose of this guide, **final purchase price** refers to the final amount charged to the purchaser, which includes all the applicable fees and taxes for the wine or wine cooler.

Basic Price

For the purpose of this guide, the basic price is the "final purchase price" minus the total of:

1. The amount of any deposit on the wine or wine cooler container that is required to be collected or remitted under the Ontario Deposit Return Program, and
2. All taxes imposed under Part IX of the *Excise Tax Act* (Canada) in respect of the purchase of the wine or wine cooler (i.e., HST).

The basic price is used on multiple fields of the return, primarily to report non-taxable distributions.

Example: Ontario wine with a final purchase price of $14.95 per bottle (750 mL):

1. Deduct deposit (amount #1 above) applicable to the container (750 mL bottle is $0.20):

   $14.95 - $0.20 = $14.75.

2. Deduct HST (amount #2 above, currently 13%) in respect of the purchase of the bottle, rounded to the **nearest cent**:

   HST on bottle = ($14.75/1.13) x 0.13 = $1.6969, rounded to nearest cent = $1.70.

   $14.75 - $1.70 = **$13.05 = "basic price"** of the bottle.

Retail Price

Under the Act, the **retail price** of the wine or wine cooler is the "final purchase price" minus the total of the following amounts:

1. The amount of any deposit on the wine or wine cooler container that is required to be collected or remitted under the Ontario Deposit Return Program.

2. All taxes imposed under Part IX of the *Excise Tax Act* (Canada) in respect of the purchase of the wine or wine cooler (i.e., HST), and
3. Wine basic tax imposed under the Act in respect of the purchase of the wine or wine cooler, if applicable.

Although the wine basic tax does not apply to Ontario wine and Ontario wine coolers purchased from **on-site winery retail stores**, the retail price must still be determined to calculate and report the total distribution for these products on the return and schedule.

The retail price is used on multiple fields, primarily to report distributions that are subject to the wine basic tax (including non-Ontario wine and wine coolers).

Example 1: Ontario wine purchased at an on-site winery retail store in April 2026, with a final purchase price of $14.95 per bottle (750 mL):

1. Deduct deposit (amount #1 above) applicable to the container (750 mL bottle is $0.20):

   $14.95 - $0.20 = $14.75.

2. Deduct HST (amount #2 above, currently 13%) in respect of the purchase of the bottle, **rounded to the nearest cent**:

   HST on bottle = ($14.75/1.13) x 0.13 = $1.6969, rounded to nearest cent = $1.70.

   $14.75 - $1.70 = **$13.05 = “retail price”** (as no wine basic tax applies in this case).

Example 2: Non-Ontario wine purchased at an on-site winery retail store in April 2026, with a final purchase price of $15.95 per bottle (1500 mL):

1. Deduct deposit (amount #1 above) applicable to the container (1500 mL bottle is $0.20):

   $15.95 - $0.20 = $15.75.

2. Deduct HST (amount #2 above, currently 13%) in respect of the purchase of the bottle, **rounded to the nearest cent**:

   HST on bottle = ($15.75/1.13) x 0.13 = $1.8119, rounded to nearest cent = $1.81.

   $15.75 - $1.81 = $13.94 = “basic price” of the bottle.

3. Deduct the wine basic tax to determine the “retail price”:
   a. Add 1 to the wine basic tax rate that applies to the wine: 1 + 19.1% = 1.191*
   b. Divide the result in Step 2 by the result in Step 3(a):

      $13.94/1.191 = **$11.70 = “retail price”** of the bottle (rounded to the nearest cent).

      ***Note**: If/When there is a rate change, change this value for the rate in effect for the sale or distribution.

Example 3: **Non-Ontario** wine cooler package purchased at an on-site winery retail store in April 2026, with a final purchase price of $11.95 for 4 bottles (330 mL each):

1. Deduct deposit (amount #1 above) applicable to each container (330 mL bottle is $0.10 per bottle x 4 bottles = $0.40):

   $11.95 - $0.40 = $11.55.

2. Deduct HST (amount #2 above, currently 13%) in respect of the purchase of the package, **rounded to the nearest cent**:

   HST on package = ($11.55/1.13) x 0.13 = $1.3288, rounded to nearest cent = $1.33.

   $11.55 - $1.33 = $10.22 = “basic price” of the package

3. Deduct the wine basic tax to determine the “retail price”:
   a. Add 1 to the basic tax rate that applies to the wine cooler: 1 + 19.1% = 1.191*.
   b. Divide the result in Step 2 by the result in Step 3(a):

   $10.22/1.191 = **$8.58 = “retail price”** of the package.

   ***Note**: If/When there is a rate change, change this value for the rate in effect for the sale or distribution.

Tax Distribution (other than by sale)

Taxable distribution (other than by sale) refers to wine or wine cooler used or distributed by you without charge (e.g., at staff parties) and includes distributions that do not qualify under the promotional distribution exemption, or exceeds the promotional distribution exemption amount. **In these situations, you are considered the purchaser of the wine or wine cooler and must pay the applicable tax.**

Non-Taxable Distribution (other than by sale)

Non-taxable distribution (other than by sale) refers to wine or wine coolers you distributed without charge in Ontario and that you are claiming as being exempt from wine basic tax under the **promotional distribution exemption**. The maximum amount that may be claimed under this exemption is 10,000 litres per corporate family per 12-month period, beginning July 1.

For more information regarding the promotional distribution exemption visit ontario.ca/promotionaldistribution.

Schedule A – Product Distribution for Ontario and Non-Ontario Wine and Wine Coolers

Complete **Schedule A – Product Distribution** for Ontario and Non-Ontario Wine and Wine Coolers and then the **Tax Due Calculation**. When using ONT-TAXS online, information entered is used to automatically calculate and populate the **Tax Due Calculation**.

How to report in dollars

In fields marked ($), report the distribution amounts by product type using the applicable price:

- For distributions subject to wine basic tax (including non-Ontario wine and non-Ontario wine coolers), report the total “retail price” of all products distributed.
- For Non-Taxable Distributions (other than by sale), report the total “retail price” of all products distributed.
- For all other Non-Taxable Distributions, report the total “basic price” of all products distributed.

The Wine Tax-Related Terms and Definitions section of this guide provides assistance with calculating the “retail price” or the “basic price” of the products to be set out in this schedule.

Report the distribution according to product type

Report the total distribution according to product type:

- Ontario wine
- Ontario wine coolers
- Non-Ontario wine
- Non-Ontario wine coolers

Dollar amounts should correlate with litres

Report taxable and non-taxable distributions in both dollars and litres. Ensure the dollar amounts align with the corresponding litres within each product type.

For example, for non-Ontario wine, report total distribution (by sale) in both dollars and litres.

Product Distribution, (in dollars) On-Site Distribution

For help with a specific term or definition, refer to the Wine Tax Related Terms and Definitions section of this guide.

Distribution (by sale)

Total “retail price” (in dollars) of product distributed, per product type by reason of sale, during the reporting period.

Note: Although the wine basic tax does not apply to Ontario wine and wine coolers purchased from **on-site winery retail stores**, the distribution of these products must still be reported on the return and schedule.

This includes distributions:

- to other nations' embassies and consulates in Ontario (unless the distributions have been sold through the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO), in which case these distributions are reported as Direct Delivery Sales to Licensees or Other LCBO Sales on Schedule A, as appropriate).
- at farmers' markets.

Distribution (other than by sale)

Total "retail price" (in dollars) of product that was used or distributed by you without charge, per product type, during the reporting period.

Non-Taxable Distribution

Direct Delivery Sales to Licensees

Total "basic price" (in dollars) of product distributed, per product type, during the reporting period, under the LCBO's **direct delivery program** to establishments (i.e., bars and restaurants) licensed to sell alcoholic beverages by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

Duty-Free Sales in Ontario

Total "basic price" (in dollars) of product distributed, per product type, during the reporting period to duty-free stores in Ontario (where the store is located in a transportation hub and where the purchaser must leave Ontario directly as part of their travel segment at the transportation hub).

Other LCBO Sales

Total "basic price" (in dollars) of product distributed, per product type, during the reporting period, that you sold directly to the LCBO or distributed on behalf of the LCBO, not otherwise included in another field. This includes:

- Amounts sold to the LCBO.
- Amounts sold under any liquor sales licence issued to you by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (e.g., "**Tied House**" liquor sales licence or "**By the Glass**" manufacturer's limited liquor sales licence).
- Amounts distributed pursuant to a purchase order from the LCBO to recipients such as grocery stores and convenience stores that have an authorization from the Alcohol Gaming Commission of Ontario to sell wine or wine coolers in that store.
- Amounts sold to other wineries for their off-site winery retail stores.

Sales to Ontario Wineries

Total “basic price” (in dollars) of product distributed, per product type, during the reporting period, to other Ontario wineries, including wine and wine coolers sold to another winery that will sell your wine as part of its souvenir or gift package at its **on-site winery retail store** (not at an off-site winery retail store).

Do not include distributions to other off-site winery retail store in this field. These distributions are reported as Other LCBO Sales on Schedule A.

Exports

Total “basic price” (in dollars) of product, per product type, sold and delivered outside of Ontario during the reporting period.

This includes distributions to other nations’ embassies and consulates **outside of Ontario**.

This also includes purchases by the Government of Canada where the wine or wine cooler will be warehoused in Ontario and afterwards will be exported for use by Canadian diplomatic or consular offices abroad (e.g., under the federal **Canadian Wine Initiative**).

Distributions **in Ontario** to the federal government (other than under the Canadian Wine Initiative) and to other nations’ embassies and consulates, if they are not distributions on behalf of the LCBO, are distributions that may be subject to the wine basic tax. This is normally reported as Taxable Distribution (by sale) on Schedule A.

Non-Taxable Distribution (other than by sale)

Total “retail price” (in dollars) of product, per product type, you distributed without charge in Ontario during the reporting period for which you are claiming the **promotional distribution exemption**.

Note: As for all entries on the return and schedule, keep records supporting the exemption claimed.

Product Distribution (in litres)

For help with a specific term or definition, refer to the Wine Tax Related Terms and Definitions section of this guide.

Taxable Distribution

Taxable Distribution (by sale)

Total volume (in litres) of product distributed, per product type, by reason of sale, during the reporting period.

This includes distributions:

- to other nations' embassies and consulates in Ontario (unless the distributions are on behalf of the LCBO, in which case these distributions are reported as Direct Delivery Sales to Licensees or Other LCBO Sales on Schedule A, as appropriate).
- at farmers' markets.

Taxable Distribution (other than by sale)

Total volume (in litres) of product that was used or distributed by you without charge, per product type, during the reporting period.

Non-Taxable Distribution

Direct Delivery Sales to Licensees

Total volume (in litres) of product distributed, per product type, during the reporting period under the LCBO's **direct delivery program** to establishments (i.e. bars and restaurants) licensed to sell alcoholic beverages by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

Duty-Free Sales in Ontario

Total volume (in litres) of product distributed, per product type, during the reporting period to duty-free stores in Ontario (where the store is located in a transportation hub and where the purchaser must leave Ontario directly as part of their travel segment at the transportation hub).

Other LCBO Sales

Total volume (in litres) of product distributed, per product type, during the reporting period that you sold directly to the LCBO not otherwise included in another field. This includes:

- Amounts sold to the LCBO.
- Amounts sold under any liquor sales licence issued to you by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (e.g., "**Tied House**" liquor sales licence or "**By the Glass**" manufacturer's limited liquor sales licence).
- Amounts distributed pursuant to a purchase order from the LCBO to recipients such as grocery and convenience stores that have an authorization from the Alcohol Gaming Commission of Ontario to sell wine or wine coolers in that store.
- Amounts sold to other wineries for their off-site winery retail stores.

Sales to Ontario Wineries

Total volume (in litres) of product distributed, per product type, during the reporting period to other Ontario wineries, including wine and wine coolers sold to another winery that will sell your wine as part of its souvenir or gift package at its winery retail store (not at an off-site winery retail store).

Do not include distributions to other off-site winery retail stores in this field. These distributions are reported as “LCBO sales” on Schedule A.

Exports

Total volume (in litres) of product, per product type, sold and delivered outside of Ontario during the reporting period.

This includes distributions to other nations’ embassies and consulates **outside of Ontario**.

This also includes purchases by the Government of Canada where the wine or wine cooler will be warehoused in Ontario and afterwards will be exported for use by Canadian diplomatic or consular offices abroad (e.g., under the federal **Canadian Wine Initiative**).

Distributions **in Ontario** to the federal government (other than under the Canadian Wine Initiative) and to other nations’ embassies and consulates, if they are not distributed on behalf of the LCBO, are distributions that may be subject to the wine basic tax. This is normally reported as Taxable Distribution (by sale) on Schedule A.

Non-Taxable Distribution (other than by sale)

Total volume (in litres) of product, per product type, you distributed without charge in Ontario during the reporting period for which you are claiming the **promotional distribution exemption**.

Note: As for all entries on the return and schedule, keep records supporting the exemption claimed.

Instructions for Reviewing Tax Due Calculation and Submitting a Return

The **Tax Due Calculation** fields are automatically populated for review based on the information entered on the previous screens.

Enter any adjustments to the tax payable in the **Adjustments** field. This may include product returns processed after the sale was reported in a previous return. **Enter the adjustment amount as a negative value to reduce the amount of tax payable or to claim a credit**.

If changes are required, you may return to the relevant section to update the information.

On the **Review** screen, the following fields are automatically populated:

- **Adjustments**: The total of adjustments (debit or credit) for the reporting period.
- **Total Tax Payable**: The total amount of wine tax payable for the reporting period.

- **Tax Due (Credit)**: The total wine tax amount owing or credit payable after adjustments for the reporting period.

Before submitting the return, the authorized signing officer confirms that the information provided in the return is, to the best of their knowledge, true, correct and complete.

Please retain this guide for future reference. If you require additional copies, please refer to our website ontario.ca/finance or contact us at 1-866-ONT-TAXS (1-866-668-8297).

Cette publication est disponible en français sous le titre « Guide relatif à la Déclaration sur le vin et le vin panaché ». Vous pouvez obtenir un exemplaire en appelant le 1-866-ONT-TAXS (1-866-668-8297) ou en visitant ontario.ca/finances.