

AT THE BAR WITH BOWDITCH

A Legal Blog for the Craft Brewing Community

Drawing (Or, More Accurately, Pouring) a Blank?

BY ROBERT G. YOUNG • MAY 25, 2017

In a guidance issued on May 24, 2017, the Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission announced a loosening of the Commonwealth's stringent growler-filling requirements. Under this new guidance, farmer-brewers and pub-brewers may refill large glass growlers (i.e., growlers that the customer brings in) as long as the following three conditions are met:

1. The growler is entirely blank (i.e., does not have any labeling from a different brewery)
2. The growler is brought in empty
3. The brewer fills the growler from a tank of tax-determined beer made by or for the brewer

Note that even under this guidance, any brewer that pre-fills growlers for purchase still must use only its own branded glass.

Could this relatively modest relaxing of the growler-filling requirement portend bigger changes for craft brewers and their consumers in the near future? Stay tuned…

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