

Frequently Asked Questions on Alcohol Health Labelling

Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018 and Public Health (Alcohol) (Labelling) Regulations 2023

Commencement Date and Compliance	
What legislation relates to the health labelling of alcohol products?	Section 12 of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018 and the Public Health (Alcohol) (Labelling) Regulations 2023.
When was the legislation enacted?	Section 12 of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act on labelling has been enacted since November 2018 and comes into effect on 22 May 2026. Section 12 of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act was commenced and the Public Health (Alcohol) (Labelling) Regulations 2023 were signed into law in May 2023.
When does the legislation come into effect?	22 May 2026.
Was there a lead in time for industry to prepare for this change?	There has been a three-year lead in time to give business time to prepare for and implement the changes necessary to comply with the requirements. Therefore, there is no provision for an additional transition period after the commencement date.
What products does the labelling legislation apply to?	The law applies to all alcohol products as defined by the Finance Act 2003 which includes vintage, specialised, craft or any other alcohol product as defined by the Act. See link here
Who is responsible for the labelling of an alcohol product?	Any person who sells an alcohol product within the State. This includes manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers of alcohol products.
What type of retail premises does the legislation apply to?	It applies to retailers selling alcohol such as supermarkets, convenience stores, petrol stations, standalone off-licences, public houses, restaurants, hotels etc.
Does it apply to on-licences or off-licences?	It applies to all licensed premises in the state both on-licence and off-licence.
Who enforces the legislation?	The Health Service Executive, National Environmental Health Service (NEHS).
Labels	
What is required on the label?	The detail is set out in Schedule 1 of the regulations. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A warning that drinking alcohol causes liver disease • A warning symbol to inform the public of the danger of alcohol consumption when pregnant. • A warning that there is a direct link between alcohol and fatal cancers • Quantity in grams of alcohol in the container • Energy value expressed in kilojoules and kilocalories in the container.

	Details of the HSE website– Visit www.askaboutalcohol.ie
How do I calculate grams of alcohol in an alcohol product?	<p>Section 12(16) of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018 provides this calculation as follows:</p> <p>The quantity in grams of alcohol in an alcohol product is calculated using the formula $A \times B \times 0.789 = C$</p> <p>A = volume in millilitres of liquid contained in the alcohol product</p> <p>B = alcoholic strength by volume of the alcohol product</p> <p>C = quantity in grams of alcohol contained in the alcohol product.</p>
What do I need to put on a label in terms of the energy value?	It is the view of the NEHS that Section 12(1)(v) states that the total energy value expressed in kilojoules and kilocalories contained in the container concerned must be indicated. This is the energy value from alcohol and all other ingredients. Ingredients such as sugar, wheat, barley and grapes all contribute to the calorie content and should be included.
How do I calculate the energy value of alcohol?	Annex XIV to Regulation (EU) 1169/2011 on the provision of Food Information to Consumers (FIC Regulation) provides the conversion factors for the calculation of energy. A gram of (pure) alcohol (ethanol) corresponds to a value of 29 kilojoules (kJ) or 7 kilocalories (Kcal).
Is there an option to provide the grams of alcohol and energy value on a 'per serve' or 'per 100ml' basis rather than per container?	Such information can be provided but only <u>in addition to and not in substitution for</u> the requirements as set out in the legislation which are the quantity in grams of alcohol and the energy value contained in the container.
Can the health warnings, health symbol and health information be displayed in a different combination to accommodate label design?	The health information, health symbol and health warnings must be as set out in Schedule 1 of the regulations. Deviations from the requirements in the legislation will be non-compliant.
Some of the nutritional information is already on the label under other legislation? Will this suffice for the alcohol legislation?	No, as per Section 12 (15) the requirements in Section 12 are in addition to, and not in substitution for, any other statutory provision in relation to the labelling of alcohol products.
Can I use a QR code?	No.
Is there an option for linear/stacking/portrait format for labelling information?	The required format for the label is set out in Schedule 1 of the regulations. Stacking in a portrait manner or a linear format will not comply. Deviations from the requirements in the legislation will be non-compliant.
Is there a pre-made artwork available for the label?	There is no pre-made artwork available. All specifications are prescribed in the legislation and in the guidance for industry document available here

Is there an option to print the label in black and white?	No, the specific colours are laid out in the regulations and in the guidance for industry.
Can a manufacturer/retailer's own font be used on product labels for consistency?	No, the font must be as prescribed in the regulations and in the guidance for industry.
Do these health warnings need to be declared in the specific Times New Roman font?	Yes, as prescribed in the regulations and in the guidance for industry.
For the 'pregnant woman' logo, is the glass black or red?	The 'glass' in the pregnant woman logo can be printed in either black or red.
Is there a legal requirement on the placement of the label?	<p>The label must be in accordance with the formats laid out in the Schedules of the Public Health (Alcohol) (Labelling) Regulations 2023.</p> <p>The label is to be positioned in a manner which is easily legible and clearly visible to the consumer.</p> <p>The regulations require that the text of the health warnings, health symbol, health information and "Visit www.askaboutalcohol.ie" are positioned at the centre of each surface reserved for such information and in the same direction as the majority of other written information on the container.</p> <p>They also require that the label is 'printed at such a font size so as to occupy the greatest possible proportion of the surface reserved for the text of the health warning, health information and "Visit www.askaboutalcohol.ie".</p> <p>The labelling information as prescribed is to be easily visible and clearly legible to the consumer.</p>
Are there rules around how the label should be affixed to the container?	<p>The label must be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Included as part of the manufacturer's label attached to the container (b) Included on a sticker affixed to the container <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (c) stencilled, marked, embossed or impressed on the container. <p>The label must be affixed in a manner that ensures that it is not easily removable, and that it stays intact when the container is opened.</p>
How is the largest surface area calculated?	The regulations are silent as to how to measure the largest surface area of the container. However, it is the view of the NEHS that the standard way to calculate area is acceptable i.e. circumference by height. For cylindrical bottles the measurement is taken from where the

	curved surface of the container ends at the top of the bottle and where the curved surface begins at the bottom of the bottle.
Small Containers	
What is considered a 'small container' in the legislation?	A container of which the largest surface area has an area of less than 80 square centimetres.
Are there options for small containers?	<p>There are two options for small containers.</p> <p>(1). As per Regulation 9 (1) the area reserved for the health warnings, health symbol and health information shall cover an area of not less than 75 per cent of the area provided in Regulation 6(1), 7(1) and 8 respectively. This means that the size of the label measuring 60mm x 30mm can be reduced by 25 per cent.</p> <p>(2). As per Regulation 9(2) the health warnings, health symbol and health information may be attached to the container by means of an adhesive flag label. The adhesive flag label cannot be reduced in size and has to comply with dimensions laid down in Regulation 6(1), 7(1) and 8 respectively.</p>
Where do I put the adhesive flag label?	The adhesive flag label must be securely affixed to the container in such a manner that it is not easily removable, and remains intact when the container is opened. A loose neck tie label which can be easily removed will not comply.
Can I use a loose neck-tie label?	No, a loose neck tie label will not comply, as it can be easily removed.
Can I use a peel and reveal label?	No, a peel and reveal label will not comply.
Outer/Secondary Packaging	
Do the labelling requirements apply to secondary packaging?	<p>Yes, the labelling requirements apply to secondary packaging. Section 2 of the Act defines a container. A "container" means, in relation to an alcohol product, a bottle or other container and where such bottle or container is accompanied by an additional packaging, also includes such packaging".</p> <p>Therefore, the outer packaging and the individual units in e.g. a multi-pack need to be labelled in accordance with the labelling requirements.</p>
How do I label a multipack containing six cans of beer?	Each can will require a label with the health warnings, health symbol and health information as per Schedule 1. The outer packaging of the multi-pack will also require a label with the health warnings, health symbol and health information as per Schedule 1.

How are the grams of alcohol and the kilojoules and kilocalories to be displayed on the label of the outer packaging of a multipack?	<p>It is the view of the NEHS that the grams of alcohol and the kilojoules and kilocalories on the label on the outer packaging can reflect the contents of one container in the multi-pack or the entire quantity of grams of alcohol and the entire quantity of kilojoules and kilocalories in the overall container.</p> <p>The entire quantity of calories and the entire quantity of kilojoules and kilocalories from alcohol shall also include all other ingredients. Ingredients such as sugar, wheat, barley and grapes all contribute to the calorie content.</p>
Manufacturer/Importer	
I am a manufacturer/importer of alcohol products. Is stock in my premises prior to 22 May 2026 considered 'offered for retail sale or supply'?	It is the view of the NEHS that alcohol products already produced for sale or import before 22 May 2026 are not considered as 'offered for retail sale or supply' to the final consumer. This stock must be labelled in accordance with the new requirements if offered for sale or supply on or after 22 May 2026.
I am an importer of alcohol products? What do I need to do in advance of the legislation coming into operation?	<p>Alcohol products already produced for sale or import must be labelled in accordance with the new requirements if they are to be offered for sale or supply on or after 22 May 2026.</p> <p>Manufacturers/Importers are advised to ensure that the supply chain is prepared appropriately in advance to ensure compliance on 22 May 2026.</p>
I am a wine importer. Will the labelling requirements apply to new stock arriving in Ireland on the date the legislation comes into operation?	Yes, the labelling requirements will apply to new stock arriving into Ireland from 22 May 2026 as it has not yet been offered for retail sale or supply. While the stock can be imported without the required labelling it cannot be then sold within the State without it.
I am an alcohol manufacturer. Is there a time limit for bottles and other containers that have been produced prior to 22 May 2026 to be marketed without the new labelling?	As an alcohol manufacturer, bottles and other containers that have already been produced but not yet available for retail sale or supply in Ireland will require a health label if they are to be offered for sale on or after 22 May 2026.
Are older bottles of e.g. vintage whiskey/ wine exempt from the legislation?	No, there is no exemption for vintage products. All alcohol products which include vintage whiskey and wines will require a label as prescribed in the legislation once offered for retail sale or supply on or after 22 May 2026.

Is it an offence to import for sale in the State an alcohol product which does not bear the required labelling?	No. However, it is an offence for a person who imports an alcohol product which does not have the required labelling to sell the product within the State on or after 22 May 2026
How will I as a manufacturer deal with tolerances in nutritional values due to natural variations in alcohol products?	<p>Alcohol producers are already accustomed to indicating alcohol nutritional information.</p> <p>As per Article 31 of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of Food Information to Consumers (FIC Regulation), the values in the nutrition declaration are average values based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The manufacturer's analysis of the food • A calculation from the known or actual average values of the ingredients used or • A calculation from generally established and accepted data. <p>This approach allows manufacturers to account for natural variations in alcohol products.</p>
Distributors/Wholesalers	
I am a distributor/wholesaler of alcohol products, what do I need to do in advance of the legislation coming into effect?	<p>Ensure that alcohol products supplied for sale on or after 22 May 2026 are labelled in accordance with the legislation.</p> <p>Ensure that alcohol products supplied in reusable containers e.g. kegs or casks are accompanied by the appropriate document as per Schedule 3 of the regulations.</p> <p>Ensure that the supply chain is prepared appropriately in advance to ensure compliance on 22 May 2026.</p>
I am a distributor/wholesaler of alcohol. Is stock in my warehouse prior to 22 May 2026 considered 'offered for retail sale or supply'?	It is the view of the NEHS that alcohol products in stock in a regional distribution centre/storage warehouse before 22 May 2026 are not considered as 'offered for retail sale or supply' to the final consumer. This stock must be labelled in accordance with the new requirements if offered for sale or supply on or after 22 May 2026.
How are vintage alcohol products in my distribution centre/warehouse affected by the new labelling requirements?	Vintage alcohol products not yet available for retail sale or supply to the final consumer will require a health label if they are to be offered for retail sale or supply to the final consumer on or after 22 May 2026.

Public Houses/Hospitality	
What do the licence holders of a public house, hotel, restaurant etc. have to do under the new legislation?	<p>Ensure that alcohol products offered for sale on or after 22 May 2026 are labelled in accordance with the new legislation.</p> <p>Ensure that alcohol products sold in reusable containers, including but not limited to kegs or casks have an accompanying document on delivery as set out in Schedule 3 of the regulations.</p> <p>Display at least one notice in Irish and English adjacent, or in close proximity, to each public entrance to the premises as set out in Schedule 4 of the regulations.</p> <p>Have a document available specifying the quantity in grams of alcohol and the energy value expressed in kilojoules and kilocalories of each quantity, measure or unit of every alcohol product for sale in the premises. This shall be available to all customers as well as to an inspecting Environmental Health Officer. This requirement doesn't apply to alcohol products sold in containers.</p>
Does the law apply to alcohol products that I have in my public house, hotel, restaurant before 22 May but which I intend to sell on or after that date?	<p>Section 12 (13) of the Act states 'This section shall not apply to an alcohol product offered for retail sale or supply before this section comes into operation'</p> <p>It is the view of the NEHS that this means alcohol products offered for sale to the final consumer from a licensed premises and/ or their on-site storeroom before 22 May 2026 do not have to be labelled in accordance with the new requirements if offered for sale after the commencement date.</p>
As a publican/hotelier/restauranteur what do I need to do in advance of 22 May 2026?	<p>Engage proactively with your suppliers and management of supply chain to ensure that you have very little, if any, unlabelled alcohol products on the shelf or in your on-site storeroom on the 22 May 2026.</p> <p>Where there is stock on the shelf without labels on 22 May 2026 you can either over-label ensuring the labels content, layout, design and positioning are compliant with the legislation or demonstrate with evidence to the satisfaction of the inspecting EHO that specific stock was delivered prior to 22 May 2026.</p>

	The health symbol, health warning and health information must be as set out in Schedule 1 of the regulations. The prescribed label must be securely affixed to the container.
Do I have to display a notice at the entrance(s) to my premises?	Yes, from 22 May 2026 you must display a notice in the prescribed form as laid down in Schedule 4 of the regulations adjacent, or in close proximity, to each public entrance to your licenced premises. The notice is to be in both Irish and English.
What information is on the notice to be displayed at the entrance(s) to my premises?	It must have the required health warnings and health information and confirm that a document noting the grams and energy value of every alcohol product for sale in your premises is available on request.
What is the document noting the grams and energy value of every alcohol product for sale in my premises?	It is a document you must have available specifying the quantity in grams of alcohol and the energy value expressed in kilojoules and kilocalories of each quantity, measure or unit of every alcohol product for sale. This doesn't apply to alcohol products sold in containers.
What is the purpose of the document noting the grams and energy value of every alcohol product?	The aim is to provide customers with information on alcohol. This is to be available to customers on request, as well as to the inspecting Environmental Health Officer.
Do I have to include cocktails in this document?	Yes.
How will it apply to cocktails?	It is the view of the NEHS that a document with details of the quantity in grams of alcohol and the total energy value in kilojoules and kilocalories in each cocktail must be available for the customer.
How does the law apply to alcohol sold in reusable containers like kegs or casks?	A document as prescribed in Schedule 3 must accompany alcohol products sold in reusable containers i.e. kegs. This is provided by the supplier to the publican/hotelier/restaurateur.
What is meant by 'reusable container'?	It means a bottle, keg, cask or other container (other than a glass) that is intended to be refilled with an alcohol product for resale by a licence holder.
What must be included in the document accompanying reusable containers?	This document must include the health warnings, the quantity in grams of alcohol in the container, the energy value expressed in kilojoules and kilocalories in the container and details of the HSE website www.askaboutalcohol.ie
Retail Shops/Supermarkets/Convenience Stores/Stand-alone off-licences	
I have a retail shop. What will I have to do under the new legislation?	Ensure that alcohol products offered for sale on or after 22 May 2026 are labelled in accordance with the new legislation. Display at least one notice in Irish and English adjacent, or in close proximity, to each public entrance to the premises as set out in Schedule 4 of the regulations.

What information is on this notice to be displayed at the entrance(s) to my shop?	It must have the required health warnings and health information and confirm that a document noting the grams and energy value of every alcohol product for sale in your premises is available on request as per Schedule 4.
All alcohol products in my shop are in labelled containers. Do I need a document noting the grams of alcohol and energy value in these containers?	No, this document does not apply to alcohol products sold in a container that already complies with the labelling requirements. It is required in a premises where alcohol is sold in glasses e.g., glass of wine, beer, spirits etc. Therefore, it will not be required in most instances in supermarkets and retail shops.
Does the law apply to alcohol products that have been delivered to my retail shop before 22 May?	Section 12 (13) of the Act states' 'This section shall not apply to an alcohol product offered for retail sale or supply before this section comes into operation" It is the view of the NEHS that alcohol products offered for retail sale on the shelf of a retail shop and/or in their on-site storeroom before 22 May 2026 do not have to be labelled in accordance with the new requirements.
As a retailer what do I need to do in advance of 22 May 2026?	Engage proactively with your suppliers and management of supply chain to ensure that you have very little, if any, unlabelled alcohol products on the shelf or in your on-site storeroom on the 22 May 2026. Where there is stock on the shelf without health labels on 22 May 2026 you can either over-label ensuring the labels content, layout, design and positioning are compliant with the legislation or demonstrate with evidence to the satisfaction of the inspecting EHO that specific stock was delivered prior to 22 May 2026. The health symbol, health warning and health information must be as set out in Schedule 1 of the regulations. The prescribed label must be securely affixed to the container.
Will alcohol products in a retailer's catalogue/portfolio/price list before 22 May be excluded from the new labelling requirements?	It is the view of the NEHS that alcohol products would have to be on the shelf of a retail premises and/ or in their on-site store room for retail sale to the final consumer before the 22 May 2026 in order for Section 12(13) of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018 to apply.
Duty free/Tax Free Shops	
What are the requirements for a tax free shop?	They are required to display at least one notice in Irish and English adjacent, or in close proximity to each public entrance to the premises as set out in Schedule 4 of the regulations.
Does the law apply to alcohol for sale in a duty free/tax-free shop to travellers departing the State?	It does not apply to alcohol products offered for sale in duty free/tax free shops to travellers departing the State.

On-line sales of alcohol products	
I sell alcohol products on-line? What do I need to do to comply with the new legislation?	<p>Ensure that alcohol products offered for sale on or after 22 May 2026 are labelled in accordance with the new legislation.</p> <p>Display the notice as prescribed in Schedule 5 of the regulations on your website. It must be displayed in Irish and English on each page where alcohol products are displayed for sale and must be clearly visible to a person viewing the website.</p> <p>Display the quantity in grams of alcohol and the energy value expressed in kilojoules and kilocalories of each alcohol product on your website. The information must be clearly visible to a person viewing the website, appear in a clear legible script, in black font and be in close proximity to the description or representation of the alcohol product to which it applies.</p>

Please note: Interpretation of the law is a matter for the Courts. The above guidance is intended to provide general information on the legislation and should not be construed as legal advice.

Section 12 Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018

Public Health (Alcohol) (Labelling) Regulations 2023

Guidance for Industry

