



State of Vermont  
**PERMIT AND LICENSE INFORMATION**

**SMALL BUSINESS FACT SHEET  
OPERATION OF A MICRO-BREWERY**

Micro-breweries have become popular entrepreneurial projects. However, whether operated as a home occupation or from a commercial building, the wastewater from the brewing process may contain high concentrations of organic matter, which can overload traditional in-ground wastewater systems or require pre-treatment before being accepted by a municipal wastewater system. This fact sheet will provide general information about wastewater management and other permits needed.

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

A **Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Permit** ([Sheet #1](#))\* is required by the Wastewater Management Division if any of the following occurs:

- Construction of a new building with plumbing in it
- Changes in use of existing water supply or wastewater disposal systems
- Conversion of an existing building, in whole or in part, into a micro-brewery

The extent of engineering analysis and review for the proposed and/or existing water supply and wastewater disposal systems (if not municipal) will depend upon the existing uses and the proposed changes. As part of the permit review, you will likely have to hire a professional engineer or licensed designer ([Sheet #11](#)) to evaluate your existing systems and recommend whether improvements are required. Please contact the Permit Specialist or Regional Engineer in your Regional Office to further discuss your project.

Generally, sanitary wastewater (toilets, sinks & showers) and process wastewater (equipment washwater, spilled product & facility washdown) are regulated separately. For example:

- If the wastewaters from a micro-brewery were being sent to a municipal treatment facility a Pretreatment Permit ([Sheet #8](#)), might be required for the process wastewater in addition to the Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Permit ([Sheet #1](#)) for the sanitary wastewater.
- If no municipal sewer is available and the micro-brewery is using an on-site septic system for its sanitary wastes, an Underground Injection Permit ([Sheet #1.2](#)) or an Indirect Discharge Permit ([Sheet #9.1](#)) may be required for disposal of the process wastewaters.
- If the brewery serves the public, such as by providing a tasting room, and if the water supply is private (as opposed to a municipal or public water supply), then a Public Drinking Water Operating Permit may be necessary ([Sheet #21](#)). A Public Drinking Water Permit is necessary when a water supply system serves 25 or more people for at least 60 days per year.

**OTHER DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION PERMITS**

- If solids separated from pre-treatment of process wastewater are land applied, a certification from Residual Management may be needed from the Wastewater Management Division ([Sheet #10](#)).
- Bottle Certification from the Waste Management Division is needed for approval of labels and the certification of glass bottles for all beverage containers that are required to carry the "VT 5 cents" message. ([Sheet #42](#))

**DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION (ACT 250)**

Construction of improvements for commercial purposes may require that you obtain an Act 250 permit. ([Sheet #47](#))\*. If there is already an Act 250 permit on an existing commercial building, any changes may require an amendment of the permit. Contact the Act 250 Coordinator at the Regional Office for a jurisdictional ruling on your specific project.

<http://nrb.vermont.gov/>

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, Division of Fire Safety**

The Department of Public Safety, Fire Safety Division has jurisdiction over buildings that the public may enter or where there are employees. This Department reviews projects with respect to issues of fire safety, building codes, accessibility, boiler inspections and electrical and plumbing installations. Please call a Department of Public Safety, Fire Safety Division district office to determine if your business requires a permit or approval. (Sheets #[49](#), [49.1](#), [50](#), [50.1](#), [50.2](#), [50.3](#)\*)

<http://firesafety.vermont.gov/>

**DISTRICT FIRE SAFETY DIVISION OFFICES**

Barre (802) 479-4434

Rutland (802) 786-5867

Springfield (802) 885-8883

Williston (802) 879-2300

**OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICES YOU SHOULD CONTACT:**

- Vermont Department of Liquor Control ([Sheet #90](#))
- Local municipal offices for zoning and building permits
- Vermont Department of Taxes (Sheets #[91](#), [92](#) and [95](#))
- Secretary of State ([Sheet #90.1](#))
- Vermont Department of Health. Food service license (Sheets #[53](#) & [53.1](#))
- United States Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau <https://www.ttb.gov/index.shtml>

*This is not an all-inclusive list, but identifies the permit and licenses that will most likely be required prior to operating a micro-brewery.*

**PERMIT SPECIALISTS**

The Department of Environmental Conservation provides a unique service to anyone with questions about state permits. Permit Specialists are available at the numbers or email addresses listed below for assistance. They will guide you through the process by helping identify state permits or licenses for your project. It could save you time, money, and headaches.

**Permit Specialist Locator:** <http://dec.vermont.gov/environmental-assistance/permits/specialists>

Rick Oberkirch	Rutland	802-282-6488	<a href="mailto:rick.oberkirch@vermont.gov">rick.oberkirch@vermont.gov</a>
John Fay	Springfield	802-279-4747	<a href="mailto:john.fay@vermont.gov">john.fay@vermont.gov</a>
Jeff McMahon	Essex Junction	802-477-2241	<a href="mailto:jeff.mcmahon@vermont.gov">jeff.mcmahon@vermont.gov</a>
Pete Kopsco	Montpelier & St. Johnsbury	802-505-5367	<a href="mailto:pete.kopsco@vermont.gov">pete.kopsco@vermont.gov</a>

\*Sheet #'s refer to summary sheets in the Permit Handbook that offer a brief description of the permit program. The Handbook is available at:

<http://dec.vermont.gov/environmental-assistance/permits/handbook>