



Licensing, Regulation and Taxation

The wine industry is a particularly challenging business in which to succeed, as the operator must learn to conduct business in three sectors, each with its own set of issues and regulations:

- ☞ Agriculture
- ☞ Tourism
- ☞ Alcohol Beverage

The following agencies are among those that have authority to impact a winery's ability to conduct business:

Michigan Liquor Control Commission – Issues winemaker licenses (subject to approval by local unit of government), regulates marketing practices that can significantly impact wine sales (these regulations vary substantially from state to state), oversees state tax collection

Michigan Department of Agriculture – Issues food processing establishment license for general sanitation of production facilities, conducts an annual inspection, oversees pesticide applicator certification

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality – Wastewater management permits, storm water industrial permits for food processors, solid waste disposal

Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau – Issues required winery licenses, designates production standards for wine, approves each label used on wine sold, certifies the accuracy of appellation information, oversees federal tax collection

Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) – Regulates worker safety

County Health Department – May require a Food Service License for catered or special food service functions (not under winery ownership), issues well water and septic system permits

Local Unit of Government – Local zoning ordinances may restrict what forms of business operations a winery can and cannot do on land zoned agricultural, commercial, or residential; issues building permits

State of Michigan – Register name of business

U.S. Copyright Office – Trademark registration