

LIQUOR LICENSE IN DUBAI

- By Alena Parker Esq.



Dubai being an Islamic State does not support the consumption of liquor but as the economy of this State is heavily dependent on tourism, it cannot apply a complete ban on the sale, purchase or consumption of alcohol. Dubai unlike Sharjah is not a dry State but it has regulated the consumption and the transactions that take place for alcohol. Out of the few taxes that are imposed by this Emirate, one is imposed on Alcohol. Since the year of 1965, Dubai levies 30% tax on alcohol.

Import, export, manufacture, purchase, consumption or sale of liquor to third parties is all regulated by the Liquor Control Law of 1972 (hereinafter known as 'the law'). This law requires a license to be obtained before indulging in any of the activities mentioned hereinabove in regards to liquor. The law provides for a license to be obtained from the Emirates Police Headquarters which is designated to be the licensing authority for liquor.

The Licensing Authority may on the basis of an application grant a person a one year renewable license permitting him to:

- (a) Import liquor
- (b) Sell liquor to third parties from a store or warehouse
- (c) Serve liquor at a hotel, club or restaurant
- (d) Purchase liquor

The law provides for the following fees in respect to application and grant of liquor licenses:

- 1. Liquor license application form – 5 Riyals
- 2. Annual fee for liquor import license – 10,000 Riyals
- 3. Liquor sales license of a hotel or restaurant – 5000 Riyals
- 4. Annual renewal of liquor sales license of a hotel or restaurant – 2,500 Riyals
- 5. Liquor sales license of a club – 2000 Riyals
- 6. Annual renewal of liquor sales license of a club – 1000 Riyals

7. License to sell liquor from a store or warehouse – 750 Riyals

8. Annual renewal of license to sell liquor from a store or warehouse – 250 Riyals

9. Liquor purchase license – 100 Riyals

10. Renewal of liquor purchase license – 100 Riyals

11. Single license for liquor export – 100 Riyals

To apply for a license to purchase liquor the following criteria have to be fulfilled:

- 1. Age – 21 years of above.
- 2. Salary – AED 2500/month or above
- 3. Married women cannot apply for a license on her own and her husband is to issue a license for her too.

For application for the license to purchase liquor the following documents need to be submitted to the licensing authority:

- 1. Two passport-sized photographs.
- 2. A completed alcohol license application form (in Arabic) that is signed by your employer.
- 3. Passport copy.
- 4. A residency visa copy.
- 5. A letter of no objection from your employer

headed "To whom it may concern" attached with a copy of your employment contract, which will state your salary.

6. A copy of your tenancy agreement.

The licensing authority while granting the license shall take into consideration the age, income, family status, etc. and in accordance to it provide for a consumption limit on the license. Alcohol purchased is to be limited in accordance to the limit mentioned in the license. Also, a fee which is equal to 20% of the purchase limit is to be deposited with the licensing authority in the form of an administrative charge.

The Licensing Authority may on the basis of an application grant a person an export license for liquor in the Emirate subject to a specific quota restraint for fee mentioned hereinabove.

The licensing authority has the power to impose any conditions or restraints on the license so granted and may also revoke the license if it thinks fit.

No person is allowed to purchase liquor without a license for the same. But as Dubai is a tourist place, it has provided for certain places such hotels, restaurants and bars where alcohol may be purchased and consumed without the possession of a license for the same. But that does not give any person a right to purchase alcohol and consume it in public places or getting drunk and moving around in public places and such activities are strictly prohibited. Drunk driving is

not tolerated at all in Dubai and is met with strict measures. The liquor purchase license only entails the following two rights:

- 1. Purchase liquor from a store or warehouse licensed to sell liquor upon presentation of the license, in reasonable quantities for the exclusive purpose of consumption by him and members of his household and guests who are not UAE nationals, provided that the quantity does not exceed the limit on the license.
- 2. Transport the quantity of liquor shown in the above paragraph direct from the store or warehouse to his residence. The liquor is to be kept at the residence for consumption by the licensee and members of his household and guests who are not UAE nationals

Even advertising alcohol in public places or through the means of media is prohibited. Any breach of the provisions of the law is punishable with an imprisonment term of not more than 6 months or a fine of not more than 5,000 Riyals or both. The Court may in such circumstances also order the confiscation of the liquor and any tools and devices used to commit the crime.

----- *For legal advice regarding the subject, please call +971 4 4221944, or **call 800-LAWYER (529937)**.*

For further information, please contact

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