

Wine law

The regulations applicable in the UK, brief guidance to the key aspects of the law and guidance on the other laws relating to the wine trade.

How European and UK wine laws are applied

European Council and Commission Wine Regulations apply in every EU Member State and include:

- the whole wine market from the harvesting of grapes to the sale of wine to the final consumer
- the EC support system
- arrangements for importing wine into the UK from other Third Countries

The Commission also issues Directives and Notices on general matters covering wine that include lists of:

- the responsible - competent - authorities designated by Member States for enforcement and liaison purposes
- authorised laboratories in third - non EU - countries that can issue official VI 1 certificates to accompany exports of wine to the EU

Regulations that apply in the UK

The practical application of an EU law is introduced by a UK Statutory Instrument (SI). Practical applications include:

- interpretation
- enforcement responsibilities
- powers of enforcement officers
- offences
- penalties

The current UK SI is [The Wine Regulations 2011 SI No 2936 \(as amended by SI 2013 No 3235\)](#)

We are responsible for enforcing the wine regulations in the UK at the:

- import
- bottling
- UK production
- wholesale distribution

The [Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\)](#), [HM Revenue and Customs \(HMRC\)](#) and [local authorities](#) are also enforcement agencies. HMRC are responsible for all enforcement in the retail sector.

Regulations in the wine sector

[Regulation \(EU\) No 1308/2013](#) outlines the system for the control of twenty four specified

agricultural sector products, including wine. It includes legislation on:

- market intervention
- rules concerning marketing and production
- protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications.
- trade with third countries
- competition rules

It controls the regulation of wine control because it:

- establishes the requirement for certain member states to maintain a vineyard register
- provides for classification of grape varieties and vine planting authorisations
- outlines the 'wine growing zones' and gives certain restrictions on winemaking practices in those zones
- specifies the mandatory labelling information
- specifies the type of optional information that can be used
- specifies the need for accompanying documents
- lists the definitions for different categories of grapevine products in Annex VII Part 2
- sets out the mandatory labelling requirements for still and sparkling wines, semi sparkling wines and liqueur wines in Article 117
- gives information about wine sector products and the applicable Customs Codes (CN codes) covered by the regime in Annex 1 Part XII

Specific regulation requirements

Each regulation below adds more detailed requirements to the measures outlined in 1308/2013.

[Official Journal of the European Communities for Wine](#)

[The Wine and Spirit Trade Association](#)

[The United Kingdom Vineyard Association](#)

Commission Regulation (EC) No 555/2008

[Regulation \(EC\) No 555/2008](#) provides rules for implementing [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 479/2008](#) on the common organisation of the market in wine. This is applicable if you want to:

- support programmes
- [trade with third countries](#)
- have production potential

Article 40 of this regulation sets out the requirement for a V11 document for imports of non-EU wine and the control authorities responsibilities in Member States. The V11 document is a certificate of origin and analysis issued in the Third Country of origin.

Article 42 of the regulation exempts some small consignments for trade fairs and for private use by travellers and private individuals from the need for a V11 certificate. Most commercial imports of wine will require a V1 1 certificate.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 436/2009

[Regulation \(EC\) No 436/2009](#) provides rules for the application of [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 479/2008](#) for the:

- [vineyard register](#)
- compulsory declarations
- gathering of information to monitor the wine market
- documents accompanying consignments of wine products
- wine sector registers to be kept

This regulation specifies the:

- details that need to be included on the [vineyard register](#)
- need for harvest and production declarations to be submitted
- accompanying documents and records to be used for the transport of grapes and wines
- records of wine making processes to be kept

You must be registered with us within six months of planting if your vineyard:

- is above 0.1ha in size - or any smaller size if used commercially
- has any new plantings

Growers are required to submit annual harvest declarations to the us.

Producers must submit annual Production Declarations to us.

These and the information held on the [Vineyard Register](#) help to provide traceability to develop the UK wine schemes.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 606/2009

[Regulation \(EC\) No 606/2009](#) provides rules for implementing [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 479/2008](#) for the categories of grapevine products and oenological practices.

This regulation gives specific information on the:

- authorised wine making practices and processes that may be used
- lists of the approved processes - any applicable constraints are shown in the Annexes
- definitions for certain categories of wine – in particular, sparkling and Liqueur wines
- controls for the maximum levels of sulphur dioxide and volatile acidity levels in wine
- controls on blending and coupage
- restrictions preventing the coupage of third country wines within the EU

For producers in the UK, de-acidification and enrichment of wine is subject to permitted limits and we must be told about these processes.

The producer must keep accurate winery records detailing all winemaking processes and subsequent bottling records. Winery records and accompanying documents must be kept for at least five years.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 607/2009

[Regulation \(EC\) No 607/2009](#) provides rules for the implementation of [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 479/2008](#) for:

- protected designations of origin and geographical indications
- traditional terms

- labelling and presentation of certain wine sector products

This regulation provides detailed labelling rules and annual verification requirements for specific categories of wines.

Mandatory information for labelling

Specific mandatory information must be shown in one field of vision and must be capable of being easily read without having to turn or rotate the container. The mandatory information you have to include is:

- the provenance expression - for example, country of origin
- the relevant expression for wines with Protected Designation of Origin or Protected Geographical Indication unless this is replaced by an approved Traditional Expression
- type of wine category - for example, wine, sparkling wine
- the nominal volume - for example, 75cl
- the alcoholic strength - shown to zero or point five of a percent, for example, 11.5% vol - apart from wines from Australia and Switzerland where 0.1% increments can be used
- the bottler's details for still wine and the producer's or vendor's details for sparkling wine
- the product type for sparkling wines

[Labelling wine](#)

Allergen labelling

Allergen information must appear on the container but it can be in a different field of vision.

You will need to show an allergens warning statement if the sulphur dioxide content exceeds 10mg/litre and if milk or egg residues exceed 0.25mg/l.

This statement must be at least 1.2mm high - based on the height of the lower case "x" of the font being used.

[Labelling of allergenic ingredients in wine](#)

Imported wine labelling

You will need to show the importer details for third country wine. Only one importer can be shown although it is possible to list distributors in other Member States.

You will also need to include the lot number.

[Importing wine](#)

Health warnings

Whilst there is currently no legal requirement to show UK units, UK health warnings, and approved messages about responsible consumption are strongly advised.

Please see the [labelling guidelines](#) issued by the Portman Group

There is more information on health warnings on [Drinkaware](#)

Optional information

Certain optional items such as the colour and style of the wine can be given.

The vintage and grape variety may only be shown on Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and certified Varietal wines.

Certain traditional expressions can be shown if the wine meets the requirements for their use. Further information can be shown if:

- it does not conflict with the mandatory information or specified optional details
- there is no misuse of protected traditional terms or other protected expressions
- there is no risk of confusion to the consumer.

Regulation (EU) No 251/2014

[The Regulation \(EU\) No 251/2014](#) covers information on aromatised wine products, including vermouth, sangria. The regulation covers the:

- definition
- description
- presentation
- labelling
- protection of geographical indications and repeals [Council Regulation \(EEC\) No 1601/91](#)

The majority of the labelling requirements for aromatised wine products are covered by the Food Information for Consumers regulations. [Trading standards](#) are responsible for enforcing these regulations.

Our wine inspectors are involved when these products use are labelled in a way that confuses the consumer into thinking the products are normal wine. This is also the case for protected wine terms and other non-wine food products such as Reduced alcohol wine based drinks.

Related agreements

These are formal agreements between the EU and Third (non EU) countries which provide more flexibility for those countries.

They will include recognition and protection of the:

- country's winemaking practices
- traditional terms
- geographical indications listed in the agreement

The EU currently has agreements with Chile, Australia, South Africa, Canada, Switzerland and the USA to protect EU traditional terms and protected designations of origin

If you want to import wine from these countries, you need to contact the Regional Inspector in your area for further advice.