

chapter S-13, r. 4

Regulation respecting cider and other apple-based alcoholic beverages

Act respecting the Société des alcools du Québec  
 (chapter S-13, s. 37).

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## DIVISION I

### DEFINITIONS AND DESIGNATIONS

#### 1. In this Regulation,

“actual alcoholic strength” means the number of volumes of ethyl alcohol contained at a temperature of 20 °C in 100 volumes of the product at that temperature, expressed as alcohol percentage by volume; (*titre alcoométrique acquis*)

“alcoholic beverage” means an alcoholic beverage produced in accordance with this Regulation; (*boisson alcoolique*)

“apple brandy” means an unrectified mixture of alcohol and water obtained by the distillation of the must of apples and having an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 52% by volume and not more than 80% by volume; (*eau-de-vie de cidre*)

“apple juice” means apple juice that may be concentrated only by natural over-ripening of the apples, natural partial dehydration of the apples and by the action of heat or natural or artificial cold on the apples or on the juice; (*jus de pomme*)

“cider” means an alcoholic beverage obtained by the alcoholic fermentation of apple juice and having an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 1.5% by volume and not more than 15% by volume; (*cidre*)

“flavouring substances” means herbs, spices, fruits, plants and other botanical flavouring substances and their extracts or essences in water, neutral alcohol, apple brandy, glycerol or propylene glycol, and fruit juice, honey and maple syrup; (*substances aromatiques*)

“holder” means the holder of a cider maker permit and the holder of a small-scale production permit; (*titulaire*)

“neutral alcohol” means a mixture of ethyl alcohol and water obtained by the distillation of apple must, molasses or cereal and having an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 94% by volume; (*alcool neutre*)

“sugar” means medium invert sugar, fructose, glucose, sucrose and aqueous solutions thereof, provided that the sugar content of the solution as measured in degrees Brix is not less than 77.5° for medium invert sugar, 75.5° for HFCS 55, 69.8° for HFCS 43, 81° for glucose and 67.5° for sucrose. (*sucré*)

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 1; O.C. 1160-2012, s. 1.

#### 2. Cider and the other apple-based alcoholic beverages that may be produced by a holder must correspond to one of the following designations and to the characteristics of the designation:

(1) “Québec amber”: the alcoholic beverage obtained by adding apple brandy to apple juice, that has matured in oak casks for not less than 12 months and that has an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 15% by volume and not more than 20% by volume;

(2) “aperitif cider”: cider to which flavouring substances, sugar or apple juice may have been added, that, through fermentation or the addition of neutral alcohol or apple brandy, has an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 15% by volume and not more than 20% by volume, and that must have the typical characteristics of an aperitif wine or the sensory characteristics of apples or cider;

(3) “flavoured cider”: cider to which fruit or fruit juice, honey or maple syrup has been added, that has an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 1.5% by volume and not more than 15% by volume and that has the sensory characteristics of apples or cider;

(4) “cidre bouché”: cider to which apple juice may be added, that is naturally effervescent, has undergone fermentation in the bottle for not less than 4 weeks, has between 3.5 and 5.5 volumes of dissolved carbon dioxide per volume of finished product, has a volatile acidity of not more than 0.8 g per litre expressed as g/L of sulphuric acid, and has an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 1.5% by volume and not more than 7% by volume;

(5) “cidre bouché on lees”: a cidre bouché that has matured on its lees for not less than 6 months;

(6) “traditional cidre bouché”: a cidre bouché on lees whose lees have not been removed from the bottle;

(7) “ice cider”: cider obtained by the fermentation of juice of apples that has a pre-fermentation sugar content of not less than 30° Brix achieved solely by natural cold, producing a finished product with a residual sugar content of not less than 130 g per litre and an actual alcoholic strength of more than 7% by volume but not more than 13% by volume;

(8) “naturally sweet cider”: partially fermented cider that has an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 1.5% by volume and not more than 3.5% by volume before the addition of neutral alcohol or apple brandy, producing a finished product with a residual sugar content of not less than 70 g per litre and an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 15% by volume and not more than 20% by volume;

(9) “strong cider”: cider to which sugar or apple juice may be added before or during production, producing a finished product with a residual sugar content of not more than 110 g per litre and an actual alcoholic strength of more than 7% by volume but not more than 15% by volume;

(10) “light cider”: cider to which sugar or apple juice may be added before or during production, producing a finished product with a residual sugar content of not more than 110 g per litre and an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 1.5% by volume and not more than 7% by volume;

(11) “liqueureux cider”: cider that has a residual sugar content of not less than 80 g per litre and an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 5% by volume and not more than 15% by volume;

(12) “cider cocktail”: an alcoholic beverage obtained from cider to which flavouring substances must be added and to which sugar may be added, and that has an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 1.5% by volume and not more than 7% by volume;

(13) “apple mistelle”: the alcoholic beverage obtained by adding neutral alcohol or apple brandy to apple juice and that has an actual alcoholic strength of not less than 15% by volume and not more than 20% by volume;

(14) “flavoured apple mistelle”: apple mistelle to which fruits, fruit juice, honey or maple syrup have been added, the finished product having the sensory characteristics of apples;

(15) “fire cider”: cider obtained by the fermentation of juice of apples that has a pre-fermentation sugar content of not less than 28 °Brix achieved solely by heat, producing a finished product with a residual sugar content of not less than 80 g per litre and an actual alcoholic strength of more than 9% by volume but not more than 15% by volume.

Québec amber, cider cocktail, apple mistelle and flavoured apple mistelle. Despite the foregoing, cider cocktail is deemed to be light cider for the purposes of its marketing.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 2; O.C. 1160-2012, s. 2.

## **DIVISION II**

### **PRODUCTION AND BOTTLING REQUIREMENTS**

O.C. 1096-2008, Div. IV; O.C. 1160-2012, s. 3.

**3.** Except as provided in section 2, no ethyl alcohol may be added and no enrichment may be carried out in the production of an alcoholic beverage.

For the purposes of this Regulation, “enrichment” means the addition, during the production of an alcoholic beverage, of any substance other than ethyl alcohol for the purpose of increasing the alcoholic strength of the beverage or making it mellow or mellower.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 3.

**4.** Acidification must be achieved solely by the use of not more than 2 g per litre of tartaric, citric, malic or lactic acid, expressed as g/L of sulphuric acid.

Deacidification must be achieved solely by the use of not more than 2 g per litre of calcium carbonate, neutral potassium tartrate and double calcium salt of tartaric and malic acids, expressed as g/L of sulphuric acid.

Acidification and deacidification are mutually exclusive.

Nothing in this section may be construed to prohibit malolactic fermentation.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 4.

**5.** The total volatile acidity of an alcoholic beverage, expressed as g/L of acetic acid, must not be more than 2 g per litre, or more than 1.64 g per litre, expressed as g/L of sulphuric acid.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 5.

**6.** If potassium ferrocyanide is used in the production of an alcoholic beverage, there must remain no trace of the substance after the treatment.

The holder must, within 10 days after using the substance, have the production lot of the alcoholic beverage tested by a member of the Ordre des chimistes du Québec for the presence of potassium ferrocyanide and send the professional’s analysis report to the Régie des alcools, des courses et des jeux.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 6.

**7.** The addition of water in the production of an alcoholic beverage other than a cider cocktail is prohibited.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 7.

**8.** A cider cocktail must contain, by weight of the finished product, not less than 25% juice extracted from apples harvested in Québec. For other alcoholic beverages, that percentage must not be less than 80%.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 8.

**9.** Alcoholic beverages must be stabilized to maintain their typical characteristics at its marketing throughout their durable life.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 9; O.C. 803-2021, s. 1.

**10.** *(Revoked).*

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 10; O.C. 803-2021, s. 2.

**11.** The colour of an alcoholic beverage must derive exclusively from the materials authorized for its production and may also derive from the addition of caramel in the case of Québec amber, aperitif cider, flavoured cider, cider cocktail, apple mistelle and flavoured apple mistelle.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 11; O.C. 1160-2012, s. 4.

**12.** Québec amber, aperitif cider, naturally sweet cider and apple mistelle must not be carbonated.

Flavoured cider, ice cider, strong cider, light cider, liqueux cider and cocktail cider may be artificially injected with carbon dioxide provided that the volume of dissolved carbon dioxide per volume of finished product is 1.5 to 2.5 or 3.5 to 5.5.

This section must not be construed as a prohibition against adding to a light cider a quantity of carbon dioxide less than that set out in the preceding paragraph to produce a few bubbles at opening indicating light effervescence.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 12.

**13.** A holder of a small-scale production permit must use Québec-produced fruit, fruit juice, honey or maple syrup in the production of aperitif cider, flavoured cider and flavoured apple mistelle.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 13; O.C. 1160-2012, s. 5.

**13.1.** Holders of a small-scale production permit that are cider producers must have a minimum of 1 ha of apple trees on their land and press and transform at their establishment, into cider or another apple-based alcoholic beverage, the apples they grow on their land or on leased land, and must bottle, bag or barrel at their establishment the cider and alcoholic beverages they make for marketing purposes.

O.C. 1160-2012, s. 6; S.Q. 2020, c. 31, s. 76.

**13.2.** Holders of a cider maker permit must transform, at their establishment, apples or apple juice into cider or another apple-based alcoholic beverage, and must bottle, bag or barrel themselves at their establishment the cider and alcoholic beverages they make for marketing purposes; the apples used may be grown by the permit holder or purchased from an apple producer in accordance with the rules applicable to the product made.

O.C. 1160-2012, s. 6.

**14.** Ice cider produced by a holder must be made from apples grown by the holder and the pressing of the apples and subsequent stages of the production process must take place at the holder's establishment.

Despite the foregoing, a holder of a cider maker permit may subcontract the pressing of his or her apples in Québec for the purposes of producing an ice cider, provided that no juice concentration or freezing is performed during such pressing and that a traceability system be implemented and maintained, in respect of the apples used by the permit holder to make all of the holder's ice cider, between the raw material and the finished product certified by an accredited certification body, approved by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

In addition, the permit holder may make ice cider by using no more than 50% of Québec apples not grown by the permit holder.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 14; O.C. 1160-2012, s. 7.

**15.** The use of artificial cold in the production of ice cider is permitted only for purposes of malic precipitation, provided the temperature is not lower than -4 °C.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 15.

**16.** Except as otherwise provided in this Regulation, only the following substances may be used in the production of an alcoholic beverage:

(1) yeast;

(2) yeast foods;

(3) sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) or potassium metabisulfite in such amount that its content in the finished product does not exceed 70 ppm in the free state or 420 ppm in the combined state, calculated as sulphur dioxide;

(4) enzymes;

(5) ascorbic acid or erythorbic acid or their salts;

(6) activated carbon;

(7) clay;

(8) diatomaceous earth;

(9) gelatine;

(10) egg white;

(11) albumen;

(12) sodium chloride to a maximum of 1 g per litre;

(13) silica gel;

(14) casein;

(15) tannic acid not exceeding 200 ppm;

(16) polyvinylpyrrolidone not exceeding 2 ppm in the finished product;

(17) bentonite;

(18) oxygen;

(19) ozone;

(20) sorbic acid or salts thereof not exceeding 500 ppm in the finished product, calculated as sorbic acid.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 16.

### **DIVISION III**

#### **LABELLING**

**17.** The following information must appear, in the form of a label or otherwise, on containers of alcoholic beverages in bold, indelible, legible characters in distinct contrast to any other information:

- (1) the designation corresponding to the relevant production process set out in section 2;
- (2) the holder's name and address and the permit number under which the holder has produced the alcoholic beverage;
- (3) the words "product of Québec";
- (4) as applicable, the effervescence as provided in section 20;
- (5) if applicable, the method referred to in the second paragraph of section 21 used to obtain the effervescence;
- (6) the actual alcoholic strength;
- (7) the net volume;
- (8) the alphanumeric code identifying the production lot of the alcoholic beverage.

The information listed in subparagraphs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the first paragraph must appear on the principal display panel of the container.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 17; O.C. 1160-2012, s. 8.

**17.1.** The words "Made and bottled on the property" on a container is reserved exclusively for cider produced under the small-scale production permit described in section 13.1.

O.C. 1160-2012, s. 9.

**18.** For the purposes of subparagraph 1 of the first paragraph of section 17,

- (1) the designations "strong cider" and "light cider" may be replaced by "cidre de cru" preceded or followed by the name of the holder's agricultural operation if the cider has not been enriched otherwise than by the addition of apple juice and the cider is made entirely from apples from that agricultural operation;
- (2) the designations "strong cider" and "light cider" may be replaced by the single word "cider";
- (3) the designation "light cider" may be replaced by "early cider" or "nouveau cider" if the cider has been made from summer apples, has an actual alcoholic strength of not more than 3% by volume, has no sugar added during production, and is marketed by the holder between 15 September and 31 December of the year in which the apples used in the production process were grown; and
- (4) the designation "aperitif cider" may be replaced by "vermouth cider" or "apple vermouth" if the cider has the typical characteristics of a vermouth as a result of the flavouring obtained by the use of derived substances, in particular the *Artemisia* species.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 18.

**19.** The vintage year may appear on the containers of all alcoholic beverages except aperitif ciders, flavoured ciders, flavoured apple mistelle and cocktail ciders.

The year must correspond to the year of the growing season of all the apples used in the production of the alcoholic beverage, except, as applicable, the apples used to make neutral alcohol or apple brandy.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 19; O.C. 1160-2012, s. 10.

**20.** The effervescence of an alcoholic beverage must be declared on the label and appear immediately preceding the designation, in characters of the same size and colour, and be described in the following terms:

(1) “crackling” if the alcoholic beverage contains between 1.5 to 2.5 volumes of dissolved carbon dioxide per volume of finished product;

(2) “sparkling” if the alcoholic beverage contains between 3.5 to 5.5 volumes of dissolved carbon dioxide per volume of finished product.

The word “perlant” may be used if light cider contains not more than 1 volume of dissolved carbon dioxide per volume of finished product and is characterized at opening by the appearance of a few bubbles indicating light effervescence.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 20.

**21.** The method used to produce the effervescence in an alcoholic beverage other than a cider cocktail may appear on the container, in which case the method must be described in the following terms:

(1) “cuve close method” if the effervescence is obtained exclusively in the last stage of fermentation in closed vessels for a period of not less than 4 weeks;

(2) “traditional method” or “classic method” if the effervescence is obtained exclusively from a final fermentation in the bottle for not less than 9 months, during which time the product remains on the lees and after which the product is separated from its lees by disgorging;

(3) “bottle-fermented” if the effervescence is obtained exclusively by a final fermentation in the bottle for not less than 2 months, during which time the product remains on the lees and after which the product is separated from its lees by disgorging or filtration.

If the alcoholic beverage is artificially injected with carbon dioxide as provided in the second paragraph of section 12, the descriptor “carbonated” or “artificial effervescence” must appear on the label after the description of the effervescence in the first paragraph of section 20 in characters of the same size and colour as those used for the designation.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 21.

**22.** The residual sugar content may appear on the label as follows:

(1) for effervescent alcoholic beverages:

(a) “brut” if the sugar content is less than 30 g per litre;

(b) “medium dry” or “semi-dry” if the sugar content is not less than 30 g per litre but less than 50 g per litre;

(c) “sweet” if the sugar content is not less than 50 g per litre;

(2) for still alcoholic beverages having an actual alcoholic strength of not more than 15% by volume:

(a) “dry” if the sugar content is not more than 25 g per litre;

(b) “sweet” if the sugar content is more than 25 g per litre;

(3) for still alcoholic beverages having an actual alcoholic strength of more than 15% by volume:

(a) “dry” if the sugar content is not more than 30 g per litre;

(b) “sweet” if the sugar content is more than 30 g per litre.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 22.



**23.** Information and illustrations on the container of an alcoholic beverage must meet all requirements, be accurate, not give rise to a risk of confusion or misunderstanding in the minds of consumers, more specifically regarding the raw material used, and make no reference to any other alcoholic beverage defined in the Act respecting offences relating to alcoholic beverages (chapter I-8.1).

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 23.

**24.** No words or illustration which would identify or associate the contents with any of the following may appear on the container of an alcoholic beverage:

(1) a person authorized by the Société des alcools du Québec under subparagraph *h* of the first paragraph of section 17 of the Act respecting the Société des alcools du Québec (chapter S-13) to sell alcoholic beverages defined in the Act respecting offences related to alcoholic beverages (chapter I-8.1);

(2) a holder of a grocery permit issued under the Act respecting liquor permits (chapter P-9.1);

(3) a holder of a permit authorizing consumption on the premises issued under the Act respecting liquor permits, unless the alcoholic beverage has been bottled specifically for the holder and is for consumption on the premises of the establishment referred to in the permit.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 24.

## **DIVISION IV**

### **SPECIAL PROVISIONS**

**25.** Nothing in this Regulation may be construed to prohibit a holder from producing an alcoholic beverage defined in the Act respecting offences relating to alcoholic beverages (chapter I-8.1) that is obtained by adding food substances to an apple-based alcoholic beverage if the alcoholic beverage obtained cannot be used for beverage purposes and is intended to form part of another product for human consumption.

The word “cider” may be used in the designation of the alcoholic beverage but it must be accompanied by a declaration of the added food substance and the use for which it is intended.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 25.

**26.** Provisions of this Regulation that are inconsistent with the legislation in the place of destination do not apply to alcoholic beverages produced for shipment outside Québec.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 26.

## **DIVISION V**

### **FINAL AND TRANSITIONAL**

**27.** Alcoholic beverages produced or in the process of production on 4 December 2008 may, if they do not comply with this Regulation, be marketed by a holder for 18 months following that date or, in the case of alcoholic beverages in the process of production on whose containers the words “traditional method” or “classic method” may appear, for 24 months following that date.

Labels and containers that do not comply with the provisions of this Regulation on 4 December 2008 may be used for 12 months following that date. However, in the case of alcoholic beverages referred to in the first paragraph, labels and containers may be used for the periods prescribed in the first paragraph.

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 27.

**28.** This Regulation replaces the Regulation respecting cider (R.R.Q., 1981, c. S-13, r. 1).

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 28.

**29.** *(Omitted).*

O.C. 1096-2008, s. 29.

#### UPDATES

O.C. 1096-2008, 2008 G.O. 2, 5133

O.C. 1160-2012, 2012 G.O. 2, 3483

S.Q. 2020, c. 31, s. 76

O.C. 803-2021, 2021 G.O. 2, 1773