



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

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**Guide to Development of Wine Standards That Align  
with Widely Accepted International Regulatory  
Practice**

Submitted by: New Zealand Winegrowers



**7<sup>th</sup> Wine Regulatory Forum  
Ha Noi, Viet Nam  
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# APEC Wine Regulatory Forum

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**Good Regulatory Practices Working Group**

## **Guide to Development of Wine Standards**

that align with widely accepted  
International Regulatory Practice

Version 1, [May] 2017

## Purpose

1. The purpose of this Guide is to assist APEC member economies which do not currently have specific regulations governing wine but are considering implementing a framework for wine regulation in their domestic market.
2. This Guide provides examples of basic wine regulatory standards covering: definitions, labelling, oenological practices, and composition, that are:
  - (a) generally accepted by most major economies engaged in wine trade; and
  - (b) considered appropriate to protect wine consumers, ensure product integrity, and minimise impediments to the trade in wine between economies.
3. This Guide does not purport to be a complete standard that should be adopted as a whole; rather it represents a body of widely accepted wine regulatory norms that APEC member economies may wish to use as the basis for developing domestic standards that are both appropriate to their own needs and situations, and facilitative of international trade in wine.
4. In developing a wine regulatory framework, an APEC member economy may, instead or in addition, determine that wine produced in compliance with another economy's wine standards will be recognised as meeting the member economy's own requirements.

## Scope

5. This Guide applies to wines falling under heading 22.04 of the Harmonized System of the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity, Description and Coding System, done at Brussels on 14 June 1983, and covers wine, sparkling wine and fortified wine. It does not cover grape must or wine products falling under heading 22.06.

## Definitions

6. In this Guide:

**alcohol content** means the concentration of alcohol, by volume of ethanol at a temperature of 20°C, typically expressed as percentage of ethanol: eg “12% alcohol by volume”;

**alcohol tolerance** means the difference between the labelled alcohol content, and the measured alcohol content, of the wine;

**container** means any bottle, barrel, cask or other closed receptacle, irrespective of size or of the material from which it is made, used for the retail sale of wine;

**cultures of microorganisms** means yeasts (including inactivated yeasts, yeast hulls or yeast ghosts), bacteria or yeast nutrients used in wine manufacture with or without

the addition of any one or more of thiamine hydrochloride, thiamine chloride, niacin, pyridoxine, pantothenic acid, biotin and inositol;

**fortified wine** means the product consisting of wine to which has been added grape spirit, brandy, spirit of agricultural origin, or any of them;

**grape juice** means a non-alcoholic beverage obtained from fresh grapes or grape must that is used as the fermentable grape product in wine making;

**grape must** means the product obtained by crushing fresh grapes that has an alcoholic strength by volume of not more than 0.5% at 20°C

**grape spirit** means the spirit obtained from the distillation of wine or the by-products of wine making or the fermented liquor of a mash of dried grapes;

**label** means any brand, mark, pictorial or other descriptive matter that is written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed or impressed on, or firmly affixed to the container of wine;

**mistelle** means grape must or grape juice prepared from fresh grapes to which grape spirit has been added to prevent fermentation and which has an alcohol content between 12% and 18%;

**oenological practices** means winemaking materials, processes, treatments and techniques, but does not include labelling, bottling or packaging for final sale;

**single field of vision** means any part of the surface of a primary container, excluding its base and cap, that can be seen without having to turn the container;

**sparkling wine** means the product consisting of wine that by complete or partial fermentation of contained sugars has become surcharged with carbon dioxide;

**supplier** means a producer, importer, exporter, bottler or wholesaler;

**wine** means a beverage produced in accordance with the oenological practices permitted by this Guide that is:

- (a) produced by the complete or partial alcoholic fermentation of fresh grapes, grape must, or products derived from fresh grapes; or
- (b) a mixture of that product in paragraph (a) and products derived exclusively from grapes;

**wine product** means an alcoholic beverage whose alcohol content is derived exclusively from wine which has been formulated, processed, modified or mixed with other foods such that it is not wine;

**Labelling**

With respect to information that must appear or may appear on a container of wine:

7. The following information must appear on a container in a single field of vision:

- (a) the word “wine”;
- (b) the economy of origin;
- (c) net contents; and
- (d) alcohol content.

Any information other than the above item may appear in either the same field of vision as the above items, or anywhere else on the container.

- 8. The word “wine” is sufficient as the product name of a product that satisfies the definition of wine. Additional information on a container concerning the type, category, class or classification of the wine may also be present.
- 9. The economy of origin of the wine is to be indicated on a container. The economy of origin is the economy in which the grapes which were fermented to make the wine were grown. If the grapes were grown in more than one economy then those economies should be indicated in descending order of their contribution to the wine.
- 10. The alcohol content indicated on a wine label is to be expressed by alcohol by volume, for example “12% alc./vol.” or “alc. 12% vol.” and to be indicated in percentage terms to a maximum of one decimal point, for example “12.1%”.
- 11. The alcohol tolerance is +/- 1.0% alcohol by volume.
- 12. A lot identification code must appear on a wine container and must be legible by physical or electronic means, at the supplier’s option.
- 13. A production or manufacturing date, expiration date, or sell-by date should not be required.
- 14. Allergenic material used in winemaking that is present in the wine, eg sulphites, and milk or egg derivatives, must be indicated on a wine container, but other permitted additives (or processing aids) need not be declared since most are also natural constituents of wine and indication of usage could therefore mislead consumers.
- 15. Consumer advice on technical matters such as sweetness indications, harvest dates, oenological practices, vineyard management practices etc. is voluntary.
- 16. Information that is required to appear on a container may be provided on a supplementary label firmly affixed to the container prior to the product being offered for sale. This provision may, for example, be relevant to imported product.

## **Oenological (Winemaking) Practices**

*Note: Oenological (winemaking) practices are not uniform. Climatic, geological and other conditions require winemakers around the world to sometimes use different oenological practices to enhance the stability, longevity or consumer acceptance of wine, while minimising the health risks to consumers. Wine regulation should take account of this diversity.*

17. Oenological practices in the production of grape wine, including sparkling and fortified wine, may involve the use of materials, processes, treatments and physical techniques (including techniques such as filtration, phase separation and electro dialysis), each used in a manner that:
  - (a) considers the climatic, geological and other conditions prevailing in the region of cultivation; and
  - (b) is based on a reasonable practical need to enhance the stability, longevity or consumer acceptance of the wine; and
  - (c) is limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the desired effect.
  
18. Different economies will choose to adopt different approaches to defining which additives and processing aids may be used in the production of wine, including sparkling wine and fortified wine. The *APEC Wine Regulatory Forum Food Safety Compendium* provides technical information and typical values in respect of substances commonly used in the production of wine. Regardless of the regulatory approach adopted, the following additives and processing aids are generally permitted in most wine trading economies<sup>1</sup>:
  - (a) Additives**
    1. Ascorbic acid
    2. Carbon dioxide
    3. Citric acid
    4. Erythorbic acid
    5. Grape juice including concentrated grape juice
    6. Grape skin extract
    7. Gum Arabic
    8. Lactic acid
    9. Malic acid
    10. Metatartaric acid
    11. Mistelle
    12. Potassium sorbate
    13. Potassium sulphites
    14. Sodium carboxymethylcellulose

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<sup>1</sup> **Note 1:** Many economies also permit other additives and processing aids that are not on this list; some economies do not permit all items on this list.

**Note 2:** Some of these additives and processing aids are typically subject to limits on the extent of their use. See *Limits on Oenological Practices*, below.

15. Sorbic acid
16. Sulphur dioxide (including potassium metabisulphite)
17. Tannins
18. Tartaric acid
19. Yeast mannoproteins
20. Sugars

**(b) Processing aids**

1. Activated carbon
2. Agar
3. Alginates, calcium and potassium salts
4. Ammonium phosphates
5. Argon
6. Bentonite
7. Calcium carbonate
8. Calcium tartrate
9. Carbon dioxide
10. Cellulose
11. Chitosan sourced from *Aspergillus niger*
12. Collagen
13. Copper sulphate
14. Cultures of microorganisms
15. Cupric citrate
16. Diatomaceous earth
17. Dimethyl dicarbonate
18. Dimethylpolysiloxane
19. Egg white
20. Enzymes
21. Gelatine
22. Hydrogen peroxide
23. Ion exchange resins
24. Isinglass
25. Lysozyme
26. Milk and milk products
27. Nitrogen
28. Oak
29. Oxygen
30. Perlite
31. Phytates
32. Plant proteins
33. Polyvinyl pyrrolidone
34. Potassium carbonate
35. Potassium ferrocyanide
36. Potassium hydrogen carbonate
37. Potassium hydrogen tartrate
38. Silicon dioxide

### **Limits on Oenological Practices**

*Note: For certain additives, such as those where the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) has specified an Acceptable Daily Intake, numerical limits on use are typically applied within national legislation to ensure the protection of consumer health. The APEC Wine Regulatory Forum Food Safety Compendium provides guidance on the typical values for numerical limits that are imposed on the use of such additives in wine in major wine trading economies. Examples of additives for which numerical limits are commonly imposed include: sulphur dioxide, sorbic acid, cyanides and complex cyanides expressed as hydrocyanic acid, and dimethyl dicarbonate.*

19. Wine, sparkling wine and fortified wine may contain added water where that water is necessary for the incorporation of any permitted additive or processing aid.
20. Wine may also contain added water as a result of the technical need to facilitate fermentation of juice or must but no water can be added to juice or must of less than 25° Brix.
21. Sparkling wine may contain added:
  - (a) grape spirit;
  - (b) brandy; and
  - (c) sugars,

provided the addition of these substances to sparkling wine does not increase its alcohol content by more than 2.5% alcohol by volume at a temperature of 20°C.

### **Wine Composition**

22. The alcohol content of wine must be not more than 24%.
23. The alcohol content of fortified wine must be not less than 15% and not more than 24%.
25. Sparkling wine must contain no less than 5 g/L of carbon dioxide at a temperature of 20°C.
26. Wine should have a mineral content consistent with the naturally occurring levels of metals and other inorganic substances found in wines of the same origin produced in accordance with the oenological practices described in paragraph 15.
27. Some substances that can be naturally occurring in wine in small quantities, such as lead, arsenic, cadmium and ochratoxin A, can have adverse health consequences. Limits imposed on such substances within domestic legislation should be consistent with the typical values found in the *APEC Wine Regulatory Forum Food Safety Compendium*.