



ServSafe Alcohol California Frequently Asked Questions

ABOUT THE LAW

Who must be trained under AB-1221?

Beginning in July 1, 2022, any ABC licensee who has an “ABC On-Premises License” will need to have their staff (**alcohol servers** and **managers of alcohol servers**) trained and certified in RBS within sixty (60) days of the date of initial employment. Current employees that require training will have until August 31, 2022 to complete their training and pass their exam.

This includes but is not limited to:

- restaurants
- bars
- fast casual dining
- tasting rooms (including off-sale locations)
- hotels
- stadiums.

RBS certification means that the alcohol server has successfully completed training by an ABC approved training provider and passed the alcohol server certification exam (hosted by ABC).

What is the definition of an alcohol server?

An alcohol server, as defined under AB-1221 includes anyone who does any of the following:

- Checks customer identification for purposes of alcoholic beverage service or entry to an ABC on-premises licensed establishment;
- Takes customer alcoholic beverage orders;
- Pours alcoholic beverages for customers; or
- Delivers alcoholic beverages to customers.

What is the definition of an alcohol manager?

A manager means any person who trains, directly hires, or oversees alcohol servers at an ABC licensed premises, or any person who trains alcohol servers how to perform the service of alcohol for consumption for an ABC on-premises licensee, including but not limited to, when to check identification or when to refuse service to a patron.

This definition specifically excludes an employee or contractor of another separate ABC licensee who is training alcohol servers for marketing or distribution purposes.



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What is the difference between RBS and LEAD?

Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) training educates people seeking employment or those who are currently employed as servers of alcoholic beverages at on-premises licensed locations. It provides servers with the necessary knowledge and skills to responsibly serve alcoholic beverages to avoid causing alcohol related harm to their communities.

Licensee Education on Alcohol and Drugs (LEAD) is ABC's free voluntary prevention and education program for off-sale licensees and their employees. LEAD provides practical information on selling alcoholic beverages safely, responsibly and legally, and preventing illicit drug activity on or around their licensed establishment.

Although some local governments currently require servers working in their jurisdictions to attend a LEAD course, the ABC LEAD program will not fulfill the requirements mandated by AB-1221 and will not qualify as an ABC approved RBS Training when the new training mandate goes into effect in 2022.

What does On-Premises License mean?

"ABC On-Premises License" means an ABC license that grants the privilege to serve alcoholic beverages to customers who then consume them on the licensed premises.

Who is exempt from taking RBS training under the new law?

Anyone whose primary or occasional job duties do not fall under the definition of an alcohol server or manager or does not perform any of the duties as defined as the service of alcoholic beverages for consumption is exempt from mandated RBS training under AB1221. However, RBS Training can be completed by any person who wishes to do so under the statewide program.

What steps must a server take to get trained and certified?

Step 1: Register on the [California Alcoholic Beverage Control Portal](#).

Create a User ID and Password.

Confirm Email.

Complete Application and get an ID Number.

Pay the \$3.00 California RBS fee to the California ABC.

Step 2: Take the [ServSafe Alcohol California Online Course](#).

Purchase course or use course key.

Enter Server ID (ID Number from the California Alcoholic Beverage Control Portal) on the site, then complete the online course.

Step 3: Return to the [California Alcoholic Beverage Control Portal](#) to take the exam.

[View detailed instructions here.](#)



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SERVSAFE TRAINING

Is ServSafe an approved training provider?

Yes!

ServSafe is listed as National Restaurant Association Solutions Alcohol, LLC. You can find our program by searching “ServSafe Alcohol” in the DBA search field.

What should I know about the training?

- \$15
- 2.5-3 hours
- Available in English. Spanish coming soon.

What content is covered?

- Alcohol Law and Your Responsibility
- Recognizing and Preventing Intoxication
- Checking Identification
- Handling Difficult Situations
- Managerial Responsibilities

Do I receive a Record of Training?

Yes! After completing the training, you will receive a downloadable, printable PDF showing you completed the course. This is available in your user account on ServSafe.com. This is NOT the end credential the server needs in California.

I recently completed the standard ServSafe Alcohol training course. Do I still need to take another training course and pass an exam in order to be certified after July 1, 2022?

Yes. All alcohol servers and managers must take this new California specific training and exam.

How soon after completing ServSafe training can a server take the exam from California?

ServSafe sends the results to California instantly through an API. The server will receive a notification email from the California Alcoholic Beverage Control Portal as soon as our data has been received.



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CALIFORNIA ABC EXAM

How long is the certification valid?

Once the server has successfully completed the training and exam, their certification is valid for 3 years. The alcohol server certification must be renewed prior to its expiration to remain valid.

What should I know about the exam?

- 50 questions
- 70% passing score
- 3 attempts. (After 3 attempts, they pay \$3 to California ABC and go through another training.)
- Users can access notes during the exam

How do I get a copy of my RBS certification?

California ABC will not be issuing physical or downloadable RBS certificates.

Upon completion of training and the certification exam, the alcohol server will be issued a certification number which is valid for three years. The alcohol server certification number is recorded on the Alcohol Server's Dashboard in the training history at the bottom of the page of the RBS Portal. Licensees will be able to verify that their servers are RBS certified using the certification number and the server's name as we get closer to the legal requirement for the mandatory statewide training.

California ABC advises servers to use a screenshot or Server ID as proof of certification.

What is my server ID number?

Your Server ID is in the "Server Certificate Details" box on your California ABC dashboard. It is called "ID Number" and is a nine-digit number.

Can staff be registered in bulk?

No, each server will need to register for their account individually.

How do I check if my staff is registered?

California ABC is using digital certificates and your servers can provide you with a screenshot of their server dashboard.

Note: California ABC is adding the ability to allow you to confirm your staff's status through the portal, but that feature is not yet available.



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Do employers need to pay for current employees to be RBS trained under the new statewide mandate?

The Department cannot give guidance on this issue, and strongly recommends employees and employers consult labor attorneys that specialize in the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act and similar laws under California law which often extend protections to employees further. The time an employee is being trained may be deemed as hours worked since the training is mandatory to remain employed and directly related to an alcohol server's employment, even if asked to be completed away from the business and not during normal working hours. In addition, certain California laws require employees to pay any costs associated for trainings required to maintain employment. This information is shared not as a mandate that employers pay for the training or compensate employees for their time to take the training, as that would be dictated by decisions by either a court of competent jurisdiction, or the Federal or State fair employment departments.