

Allston
Brighton

WIN Great Prizes Monthly

home

news

events

discussions

search

< Back to front page

Text size - +

ALLSTON BRIGHTON

Boston licensing officials suspend use of large, portable "beer towers"

Posted by Your Town March 29, 2011 08:43 AM

E-mail | Print | Comments (54)

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Boston licensing officials have suspended the use of increasingly-popular large, portable beer taps and are requiring that businesses already licensed to serve alcohol request permission to use the beverage dispensers.

RELATED SITES

- [Drink Boston](#)
- [Go To It](#)
- [Ladies United for the Preservation of Endangered Cocktails](#)

The move comes after at least two city bars, one in Allston and another in Brighton, were cited on St. Patrick's Day by Boston Police for serving "beer towers" without prior city approval and for serving to patrons in ratios that exceeded the statewide two-drinks per person at a time limit.

Beer towers, also known as "[portable] beer taps," come in an array of sizes often around double to triple the size of standard pitchers that typically hold between 48 ounces and 60 ounces. They commonly feature a spout allowing guests to pour individual cups or glasses.

The city has sent out notices to all Boston businesses licensed to serve alcohol informing that each must stop using beer towers immediately and request a hearing before the licensing board where allowed use will be determined "on a case-by-case basis."

Connect to Your Town Allston Brighton on Facebook



You like **Your Town Allston-Brighton**. · Admin Page · Insights · **Error**
You and 99 others like this 99 likes. Sign Up to see

ADVERTISEMENT

ALLSTON-BRIGHTON REAL ESTATE »

86

Homes for sale

160

Rentals available

6

Open houses this week

0

New listings this week

SPECIAL ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

CAMP GUIDE »

A camp for every kid!

Adventure, sports, theater, music, arts or technology—find the perfect camp for your child at boston.com/campguide.



Any business granted permission to serve beer towers will not be required to pay fees for receiving that consent, Licensing Board Chair Nicole Murati Ferrer said Monday.

"Please be advised the [licensing] board is taking this stance based on its concerns with serving the public need and at the same time protecting the common good and safety of all," reads the letter that the licensing chair said began being sent out Friday and continued Monday.

Meanwhile, the letter reminds business owners that "prior to the installment of any permanent self-service beer tap system, you must obtain approval from this board to amend the liquor license."

State officials were not aware of the existence of beer towers until they learned of the recent citations in Boston, said Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission spokesman Al Gordon.

"We have not seen an increase in the size of beer containers throughout the Commonwealth," he added. "Clearly bars need to adhere to the state regulations designed to prevent the dangerous consequences of alcohol that can include drink driving and personal injury,"

Within a half-hour span on March 17, Roggie's Brew and Grille in Brighton and Tavern in the Square in Allston were cited by city police, according to police accounts first reported on by the Allston/Brighton TAB.

"These beer towers are becoming more popular in the Boston area and there are questions as to whether or not they are in violation," of state laws, the police reports said.

Police said area businesses, including both cited on St. Patrick's Day, were told by officers about one week before "that they should contact the Boston Licensing Board to request a hearing relative to these beer towers and due to the uncertainty about them, cease the sale of them until a hearing is held to determine if they fall within the law," according to the reports.

The two establishments have licensing hearings scheduled for April 12, city officials said. The alcohol commission spokesman said violation of state alcohol regulations results in local licensing board hearings that, at the board's discretion, may result in a business' liquor license being modified, suspended or revoked.

Both businesses declined to comment. City police did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



ADVERTISEMENT

Allston Brighton Headlines »

- Shulamit Peck, psychologist, Zionist, lifetime learner; at 92 (1 day ago)
- Wild turkeys patrol city sidewalks (4 days ago)
- St. Elizabeth's Medical Center getting new president (4 days ago)
- Owner of snake that got loose refuses T cleanup bill (4 days ago)

Also From Allston-Brighton

NIGHTLIFE



A turbulent year for Allston businesses

TRENDS

Flyerboard

POST FLYER VIEW ALL

SPACE TO SELL BY MARY

Wild turkeys patrol city sidewalks

St. Elizabeth's Medical Center getting new president

Owner of snake that got loose refuses T cleanup bill

BRIGHTON MAIN STREETS INC.

Social Media Event
March 1st

Brighton
Laundry & Dry Cleaners

- Laundered Shirts • Wedding Gowns
- Leather and Seals
- All Work Done On Premises
- Card Operated Laundry
- Free Parking and Wash
- Same Day Dry Cleaning and Wash, Dry and Fold

430 Washington St. Brighton

CLICK FOR COUPONS

Licensing officials were not aware of any citations issued beside those against the two bars. The board's chair said those two businesses were "cited not for use, but for misuse," of beer towers because they served in quantities exceeding state regulations.

At Roggie's, police found one 148-ounce "beer tower" had been served to two guests and a pair of the 148-ounce portable beer dispensers had been served to a seven-person group.

"Based on the amount of beer served to the table, even using a standard of 16 ounces, this would be a violation," of the Massachusetts law that limits drink service to two per person at a time, police said.

Officials say 128-ounce "beer towers" were being served at Tavern in the Square that same afternoon. The restaurant's management told officers "that there needed to be two to three persons in the party to order a beer tower," police said.

Police said that ratio of beer-to-people would also exceed state limits for drink service.

State regulations designate that: "No licensee or employee or agent of a licensee shall ... deliver more than two drinks to one person at one time," or "sell, offer to sell or deliver malt beverages or mixed drinks by the pitcher except to two or more persons at any one time."

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

Twitter | Digg | Like | You like Boston licensing officials | Yahoo! Buzz | StumbleUpon

[◀ Previous entry](#) | [Next entry ▶](#)

READER COMMENTS »
[View reader comments \(54\) »](#) | [Comment on this story »](#)



They kick it in Allston like no place else

PHOTOS



Tailgating at the Harvard-Yale game

COMMUNITY



Community center begins to take shape

Local advertising by PaperG

Allston Brighton On Twitter »

Good news: #MBTA riders get 1 more year w/o fare increase. Bad news: Some red/orange-line improvements deferred - <http://bo.st/gYkRmm> 2 days ago

What, no sodas? -- Boston to ban sugary drinks on city property - <http://bo.st/gcOZTM> 2 days ago

