

LCBO Staff-Conducted In-store Tasting Program (ISTP)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. How much does this delivery option cost?

A1. \$245 + HST.

NOTE: The \$25 “Bar” fee is not applicable to this delivery option.

Q2. What is covered by this fee?

A2.

- Cost of ISTP staff hours required to prepare for and operate the tasting
- ISTP product (appropriate level of inventory on hand to support the tasting)
- Food for pairings, and supplies, such as cups
- Charity fee (\$15)
- Product for a tasting of featured product(s) for all store staff working during the tasting, led by ISTP staff person

Q3. When are stores notified about Staff-Conducted tastings?

A3. Stores will be notified of their full promotional turn of tastings four weeks in advance of the start of the Promo Period.

Q4. How and when are the LCBO Tasters selected?

A4. Store Managers will select trained staff in advance of the tasting.

Q5. How will staff be trained in advance of the In-Store Tasting Program?

A5. As of April 1, identified staff in all ISTP locations will be Smart Serve trained. Staff selected for Smart Serve training must have completed LCBO Product Knowledge Bronze, Silver and Gold levels, as well as their Service Knowledge. This advanced training ensures each LCBO Taster will have a solid foundation in all product categories and the skills to sell-in with customers. To support both the operational and experience requirements, there will be an e-learning package developed and delivered to store staff.

Q6. How will employees be trained in advance of the tastings on the products they are pouring for customers?

A6. LCBO Tasters conducting your in-store tasting will be adequately briefed and prepared for your event. Please complete and submit a [Product Information Sheet](#), which will communicate your specifications to ensure consistency throughout your promotion. SKU-specific Product Information Sheets will be available to all LCBO Tasters through an internal portal page. Thirty minutes will be allocated to research and preparation for the tasting. As this is a new service, we will be monitoring and updating/improving this process as required to best meet your needs. Please check the trade site regularly for updates to this program.

Additionally, LCBO Tasters will conduct a sampling of the feature product(s) for their in-store team members. That way, all store staff will be familiar with your product on the day of your tasting and therefore better equipped to promote it to our customers.

Q7. Is there a limit to the number of tastings that can be applied for/requested?

A7. Limit to 4 tastings per product per store per period.

Q8. Is there a change to the approval process?

A8. No. The delivery option selected – “Agent/Demonstrator” or “LCBO Staff Conducted” – will have no impact on the approval process.

Approvals will continue to be driven by the IMAGE points system. This takes into account related IMAGE programming for that period, whether or not the item is NEW, and whether the item is currently listed by the chosen store. For select Vintages locations, priority will be given to Vintage release products on release Saturdays.

Q9. Are there deadlines for scheduling or making changes?

A9. Deadline dates for trade applications to our ISTP remain the same. If it is necessary to cancel or make changes, agents are required to do so no later than five weeks in advance of the start of the promotional turn for their tasting by contacting the ISTP Administrator, rosemary.canavan@lcbo.com.

Q10. For employee-led tastings, is it the agent or the store that is responsible for product availability?

A10. The store has primary responsibility for bringing in the appropriate level of inventory to support tastings. Suggested order quantities in support of the ISTP have been active since November 2017. Agents may confirm product availability with stores in advance of the tasting. We continue to encourage agent partners to rebalance residual inventory as per the agreement with Drinks Ontario.

Q11. How are food pairings decided and supplied?

A11. Food and tastings supplies will be managed by the store when you select an LCBO Staff-Conducted tasting. Food pairings must complement the product. Trade partners may use the sell sheet to communicate a recommendation. Employees will source the food pairing locally. As of today, items must be non-perishable.

Q12. For employee-led tastings, what kind of reporting will the LCBO provide?

A12. We are currently in the process of developing the technical capabilities to automate the consolidation and distribution of tasting event results back to the agent/supplier. In the interim, we have a solution that will provide you with a report summary at the close of each period that will include key tasting metrics such as conversion rate, bottles sold and samples issued.

Q13. Can agents still do their own tastings and select agent demonstrators?

A13. For Fiscal 18-19, agents may continue to do their own tastings. However, effective Fiscal 19-20, the LCBO will move to 100% Staff-Conducted in-store tastings.

Q14. Will Enhanced In-Store Tastings and In-Store Special Events be delivered by LCBO staff?

A14. Enhanced Tastings and Special Events programs are managed by LCBO Marketing in coordination with the various business units and will not have an LCBO Staff-Conducted delivery option for F18-19.