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## STARTING A LIQUOR BUSINESS IN LAGOS STATE? WHAT TO KNOW.

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**S**tarting a business is a tedious task that requires careful planning. However, there are certain steps and precautions you can take to ensure the ease of doing business, especially if you're in the business of selling alcohol.

In Lagos State, the sale of alcoholic drinks by a business is regulated under the Liquor (Licensing) Law of Lagos State (the "Liquor Law"). The Liquor Law requires any business involved in the sale of alcohol to obtain a licence from the Licensing Tribunal of the Local Government Area.

Under Section 4 of the Liquor Law, there are 7 categories of licences. Depending on the circumstances around your business, you may choose to apply for one of the following licences: tavern licence; wine and beer on-licence; wine and beer off-licence; hotel liquor licence; club licence; general wholesale liquor licence; and general retail liquor licence.

The cost of these licences range from N500 to N500,000 depending on whether the liquor business is located in a rural community or a highly urbanized community. This is something you should factor into choosing the location of your business, some locations are more expensive than others.

These licenses, once granted, permit the licensee to sell liquor and alcoholic beverages only between the

hours of 6 am and 12 midnight on any day. To avoid penalties, it's best to obey without complaining. However, the Liquor Law does give the Chairman or any member of the Licensing Tribunal the power to extend the hours for sale on special occasions on application from the licence holder – for those special occasions. Only a club licensee may sell at any time on any day to members.

It should be noted that Section 7 and 8 of the Liquor Law prohibit the sale of liquor to a child or young person for personal consumption and the presence or employment of a child in an establishment that holds a liquor license. These sections reference Section 261 of the Child Rights Law of Lagos State in respect of the definition of a child. Therefore, a child under the Liquor Law is anyone under the age of 18

***Disclaimer: This article does not constitute legal advice neither is it a substitute for obtaining legal advice from a legal practitioner.***

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