

§ 58.1-3833. County food and beverage tax.

A. Any county is hereby authorized to levy a tax on food and beverages sold, for human consumption, by a restaurant, as such term is defined in subdivision 9 of § 35.1-1, not to exceed four percent of the amount charged for such food and beverages. Such tax shall not be levied on food and beverages sold through vending machines or by: (i) boardinghouses that do not accommodate transients; (ii) cafeterias operated by industrial plants for employees only; (iii) restaurants to their employees as part of their compensation when no charge is made to the employee; (iv) volunteer fire departments and rescue squads; nonprofit churches or other religious bodies; educational, charitable, fraternal, or benevolent organizations, on an occasional basis, not exceeding three times per calendar year as a fundraising activity, the gross proceeds of which are to be used by such church, religious body or organization exclusively for nonprofit educational, charitable, benevolent, or religious purposes; (v) churches that serve meals for their members as a regular part of their religious observances; (vi) public or private elementary or secondary schools, colleges, and universities to their students or employees; (vii) hospitals, medical clinics, convalescent homes, nursing homes, or other extended care facilities to patients or residents thereof; (viii) day care centers; (ix) homes for the aged, infirm, handicapped, battered women, narcotic addicts, or alcoholics; or (x) age-restricted apartment complexes or residences with restaurants, not open to the public, where meals are served and fees are charged for such food and beverages and are included in rental fees. Also, the tax shall not be levied on food and beverages: (a) when used or consumed and paid for by the Commonwealth, any political subdivision of the Commonwealth, or the United States; or (b) provided by a public or private nonprofit charitable organization or establishment to elderly, infirm, blind, handicapped, or needy persons in their homes, or at central locations; or (c) provided by private establishments that contract with the appropriate agency of the Commonwealth to offer food, food products, or beverages for immediate consumption at concession prices to elderly, infirm, blind, handicapped, or needy persons in their homes or at central locations.

Grocery stores and convenience stores selling prepared foods ready for human consumption at a delicatessen counter shall be subject to the tax, for that portion of the grocery store or convenience store selling such items.

This tax shall be levied only if the tax is approved in a referendum within the county which shall be held in accordance with § 24.2-684 and initiated either by a resolution of the board of supervisors or on the filing of a petition signed by a number of registered voters of the county equal in number to 10 percent of the number of voters registered in the county, as appropriate on January 1 of the year in which the petition is filed with the court of such county. The clerk of the circuit court shall publish notice of the election in a newspaper of general circulation in the county once a week for three consecutive weeks prior to the election. If the voters affirm the levy of a local meals tax, the tax shall be effective in an amount and on such terms as the governing body may by ordinance prescribe. If such resolution of the board of supervisors or such petition states for what projects and/or purposes the revenues collected from the tax are to be used, then the question on the ballot for the referendum shall include language stating for what projects and/or purposes the revenues collected from the tax are to be used.

The term "beverage" as set forth herein shall mean alcoholic beverages as defined in § 4.1-100 and nonalcoholic beverages served as part of a meal. The tax shall be in addition to the sales tax currently imposed by the county pursuant to the authority of Chapter 6 (§ 58.1-600 et seq.) of this title. Collection of such tax shall be in a manner prescribed by the governing body.

B. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection A of this section, Roanoke County, Rockbridge County, Frederick County, Arlington County, and Montgomery County, are hereby authorized to levy a tax on food and beverages sold for human consumption by a restaurant, as such term is defined in § 35.1-1 and as modified in subsection A above and subject to the same exemptions, not to exceed four percent of the amount charged for such food and beverages, provided that the governing body of the respective county holds a public hearing before adopting a local food and beverage tax, and the governing body by unanimous vote adopts such tax by local ordinance. The tax shall be effective in an amount and on such terms as the governing body may by ordinance prescribe.

C. Nothing herein contained shall affect any authority heretofore granted to any county, city or town to levy a meals tax. The county tax limitations imposed pursuant to § 58.1-3711 shall apply to any tax levied under this section, mutatis mutandis. All food and beverage tax collections and all meals tax collections shall be deemed to be held in trust for the county, city or town imposing the applicable tax. The wrongful and fraudulent use of such collections other than remittance of the same as provided by law shall constitute embezzlement pursuant to § 18.2-111.

D. No county which has heretofore adopted an ordinance pursuant to subsection A of this section shall be required to submit an amendment to its meals tax ordinance to the voters in a referendum.

E. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, no locality shall levy any tax under this section upon (i) that portion of the amount paid by the purchaser as a discretionary gratuity in addition to the sales price; (ii) that portion of the amount paid by the purchaser as a mandatory gratuity or service charge added by the restaurant in addition to the sales price, but only to the extent that such mandatory gratuity or service charge does not exceed 20% of the sales price; or (iii) alcoholic beverages sold in factory sealed containers and purchased for off-premises consumption or food purchased for human consumption as "food" is defined in the Food Stamp Act of 1977, 7 U.S.C. § 2012, as amended, and federal regulations adopted pursuant to that act, except for the following items: sandwiches, salad bar items sold from a salad bar, prepackaged single-serving salads consisting primarily of an assortment of vegetables, and nonfactory sealed beverages.

(1988, c. 847; 1989, c. 391; 1990, cc. 846, 862; 1992, c. 263; 1993, c. 866; 1999, c. 366; 2000, c. 626; 2001, c. 619; 2003, c. 792; 2004, c. 610; 2004, Sp. Sess. I, c. 3; 2005, c. 915; 2006, cc. 568, 602; 2009, c. 415.)

§ 35.1-1. Definitions.

As used in this title unless the context requires otherwise or it is otherwise provided:

1. "Board" or "State Board" means the State Board of Health.
2. "Campground" means and includes but is not limited to a travel trailer camp, recreation camp, family campground, camping resort, camping community, or any other area, place, parcel, or tract of land, by whatever name called, on which three or more campsites are occupied or intended for occupancy, or facilities are established or maintained, wholly or in part, for the accommodation of camping units for periods of overnight or longer, whether the use of the campsites and facilities is granted gratuitously, or by rental fee, lease, or conditional sale, or by covenants, restrictions, and easements. "Campground" does not include a summer camp, migrant labor camp, or park for mobile homes as defined in this section and in §§ 32.1-203 and 36-71, or a construction camp, storage area for unoccupied camping units, or property upon which the individual owner may choose to camp and not be prohibited or encumbered by covenants, restrictions, and conditions from providing his sanitary facilities within his property lines.
3. "Camping unit" means and includes a tent, tent trailer, travel trailer, camping trailer, pickup camper, motor home, and any other device or vehicular type structure for use as temporary living quarters or shelter during periods of recreation, vacation, leisure time, or travel.
4. "Campsite" means and includes any plot of ground within a campground used or intended for occupation by the camping unit.
5. "Commissioner" means the State Health Commissioner.
6. "Department" means the State Department of Health.
7. "Hotel" means any place offering to the public for compensation transitory lodging or sleeping accommodations, overnight or otherwise, including but not limited to facilities known by varying nomenclatures or designations as hotels, motels, travel lodges, tourist homes, or hostels.
8. "Person" means an individual, corporation, partnership, association, or any other legal entity.
9. "Restaurant" means any one of the following:
 - a. Any place where food is prepared for service to the public on or off the premises, or any place where food is served. Examples of such places include but are not limited to lunchrooms, short order places, cafeterias, coffee shops, cafes, taverns, delicatessens, dining accommodations of public or private clubs, kitchen facilities of hospitals and nursing homes, dining accommodations of public and private schools and colleges, and kitchen areas of local correctional facilities subject to standards adopted under § 53.1-68. Excluded from the definition are places manufacturing packaged or canned foods which are distributed to grocery stores or other similar food retailers for sale to the public.
 - b. Any place or operation which prepares or stores food for distribution to persons of the same business operation or of a related business operation for service to the public. Examples of such places or operations include but are not limited to operations preparing or storing food for catering services, push cart operations, hotdog stands, and other mobile points of service. Such mobile points of service are also deemed to be restaurants unless the point of service and of consumption is in a private residence.
10. "Summer camp" means and includes any building, tent, or vehicle, or group of buildings, tents, or vehicles, if operated as one place or establishment, or any other place or establishment, public or private, together with the land and waters adjacent thereto, which is operated or used in this Commonwealth for the entertainment, education, recreation, religious instruction or activities, physical education, or health of persons under eighteen years of age who are not related to the operator of such place or establishment

by blood or marriage within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity, if twelve or more such persons at any one time are accommodated, gratuitously or for compensation, overnight and during any portion of more than two consecutive days.

(Code 1950, §§ 35-1, 35-25, 35-43, 35-54; 1960, c. 186; 1964, c. 327; 1981, c. 468; 1995, c. 797.)

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§ 58.1-3711. Limitation on county license tax within boundary of a town.

A. Any county license tax imposed pursuant to this chapter shall not apply within the limits of any town located in such county, where such town now, or hereafter, imposes a town license tax on the same privilege. If the governing body of any town within a county, however, provides that a county license tax shall apply within the limits of such town, then such license tax may be imposed within such towns.

B. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection A of this section, in a consolidated county wherein a tier-city exists, any county license tax imposed hereunder shall apply within the limits of any tier-city located in such county, as may be provided in the agreement or plan of consolidation, and such tier-city may also impose a tier-city license tax on the same privilege, provided that the combined county and tier-city rates do not exceed the maximum permitted by state law.

(Code 1950, § 58-266.1; 1950, p. 155; 1956, c. 242; 1964, c. 424; 1968, c. 619; 1970, cc. 231, 547; 1974, cc. 196, 438; 1975, cc. 23, 621; 1976, cc. 521, 719; 1977, c. 320; 1978, cc. 772, 799, 817; 1979, cc. 565, 568, 570; 1980, cc. 318, 736; 1981, cc. 419, 636; 1982, cc. 348, 548, 552, 554, 558, 633; 1983, c. 554; 1984, cc. 247, 675, 695.)

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