

Maryland Park Service

Alcohol Policy

The Maryland Park Service provides outdoor recreational experiences for millions of visitors each year. Our State Parks feature recreational amenities, as well as campsites, full-service cabins, and picnic shelters, where families can enjoy nature-based activities that are close enough to home for everyone to enjoy.

To maintain and ensure a safe, family-oriented outdoor recreation experience for all park visitors, the Maryland Park Service regulates the **possession and consumption** of alcoholic beverages in State Parks. This policy was adopted in the interest of all park patrons, to maintain the family atmosphere of State Parks, while still allowing for the appropriate consumption of alcoholic beverages under a special permit process.

The Maryland Park Service Alcohol Policy:

- As per the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 08.07.06.19C, the Superintendent of the Maryland Park Service has prohibited alcoholic beverages in State Parks, except for the designated areas indicated below. The **possession or consumption** of alcoholic beverages in any non-designated area is prohibited.
- The **interior** of full-service cabins are exempt.
- Per State law, the **interior** of motor homes are exempt.
- Alcoholic beverages will be allowed at **designated** picnic shelters through the purchase of an Alcohol Permit available via the standard shelter reservation process. A \$35 fee will be charged for each Alcohol Permit.
- Permits may be issued, upon request, by the Park Manager, for special events **operating under a formal Use Agreement**.
- An Alcohol Permit may be revoked for cause by the Park Manager, their designee, or a Natural Resources Police Officer.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I consume alcoholic beverages in my park cabin?

- Yes, alcoholic beverages may be consumed **inside** full-service cabins by those of legal drinking age.
- Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed in camper cabins (mini-cabins). Camper cabins are commonly located in campgrounds, or within close proximity, and therefore present a potential conflict with the family atmosphere of the park campground if visitors are consuming alcoholic beverages.

Will I be cited for having unopened containers of alcoholic beverages in my vehicle?

- No, park patrons may transport unopened alcoholic beverages in their vehicles **to access areas where alcohol is allowed**. Alcoholic beverages, **whether opened or unopened**, may not be otherwise possessed while in a State Park.

Why has the Maryland Park Service adopted its alcohol policy?

The Maryland Park Service has adopted its alcohol policy to ensure a high quality, safe experience for all State Park visitors. It is intended to:

- Reduce the incidence of undesirable behaviors of park patrons who consume alcoholic beverages to excess. In 2008, before the current policy was implemented, the Natural Resources Police issued 413 citations for alcohol-related incidents and 32 DUI citations.
- Reduce impacts on state facilities and natural resources;
- Ensure the safety of park patrons, park staff and Natural Resources Police Officers.

Who can request an Alcohol Permit and how can I obtain one?

- Alcohol Permits are issued for a \$35 fee, through the standard reservation process for a designated shelter.
- Alcohol Permits may be issued, upon request, by the Park Manager for special events ***operating under a formal Use Agreement*** with the Maryland Park Service.

How much does an Alcohol Permit cost?

- A \$35 fee will be charged for each Alcohol Permit. The Permit may be revoked for cause by the Park Manager, their designee or a Natural Resources Police Officer. All revenue from the sale of the Permits will be used to support State Park operations and improvements.

Do other state and county park systems ban alcohol consumption?

- All Maryland county park systems either ban the consumption of alcoholic beverages or require an alcohol permit with the rental of a picnic shelter.
- Alcohol is banned in at least 19 state park systems: Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.
- Alcoholic beverages are banned without a permit in at least five state parks systems: Delaware, Florida, New Hampshire, South Carolina, West Virginia.

Is there a fine if I am cited for violating the alcohol policy?

- Yes, and violators may be issued a Natural Resources Citation, with a pre-payable fine of \$55 and a possible maximum penalty of \$500 for a first offense.