



Standard Guide for Sensory Evaluation of Beverages Containing Alcohol¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide provides guidelines specific to the sensory evaluation of beverages containing alcohol, including beer, wine, coolers, cocktails, liqueurs, and distilled spirits.

1.2 This guide addresses safety, legal, panel selection, sample preparation, and test procedures specific to beverages containing alcohol.

1.3 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.4 This guide does not recommend a specific test method.

2. Significance and Use

2.1 The procedures recommended in this guide can be used for the sensory evaluation of beverages containing alcohol.

2.2 This guide provides practical suggestions to maximize panelist safety and to minimize the risks and liabilities of the person or corporation responsible for administering the sensory evaluation of beverages containing alcohol.

2.3 This guide also provides practical suggestions when dealing with various government agencies that are involved in distributing beverage alcohol test products.

3. Safety

NOTE 1—See also Fig. 1 and STP 913 (1).²

3.1 **Medical Condition**—Potential panelists must be in good medical condition with no serious health problems. Inform them that they should not participate on panels if they are taking prescription or over-the-counter medications, which are contraindicated when combined with alcohol.

3.2 Home-Use Testing:

3.2.1 Home use tests with beverages containing alcohol are often used to determine how products are consumed. Transportation and storage of high proof spirits are very important. In addition to an informed consent form (see 5.2.1), it is recommended that the following statements accompany products used in home-use testing:

3.2.1.1 The sponsor of this study is a well-known major manufacturer who considers the health and safety of research participants and the public to be of the utmost importance.

3.2.1.2 Specific guidelines that must be followed while participating in this product test are listed as follows. Compliance with these guidelines is necessary to ensure that the beverage alcohol product you are given is consumed in a responsible manner. Please read and follow these guidelines carefully.

(1) Do not open test product(s) until you arrive home.

(2) If you are driving, you must transport the test product to your home in the trunk of your car.

(3) Do not drive or operate heavy machinery after sampling test product(s).

(4) Do not leave the test product(s) in a place where it is accessible to individuals under the legal drinking age.

(5) If there is a need to return used beverage containers, you must empty the container completely because it is illegal to transport open containers of beverage alcohol.

3.3 Central Location or Intercept Testing:

3.3.1 Safety is most critical in situations where consumers evaluate beverage alcohol products at a central location. There are several steps that can be taken to ensure respondent safety:

3.3.1.1 Provide transportation to and from the test location.

3.3.1.2 Have a certified bartender or highly trained professional provide each respondent with the test products. Instruct the bartender or professional not to serve respondents whom exhibit any signs of intoxication. The Hotel, Tavern, and Restaurant Association in each state offers techniques in alcohol management courses. It is recommended that all servers complete this course.

3.3.1.3 Limit the sample volume for evaluation to an amount which will ensure the respondent will not have a blood alcohol level greater than a legal limit (see Table 1).

3.4 Employee Panels:

3.4.1 When employees evaluate product(s) at their workplace, the sensory professional has additional control. This control involves scheduling panels such that employees can remain at the workplace until their blood alcohol content is reduced below legal limits (see Table 1) to drive or operate machinery.

3.4.1.1 Special considerations need to be taken when panelist's work involves the operation of equipment or any work task that can jeopardize the safety of others:

3.4.2 Do not allow these employees to be panelists.

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E-18 on Sensory Evaluation of Materials and Products and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E18.06 on Food and Beverage Evaluation.

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² The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to the list of references at the end of this standard.

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The Sponsor, (a well-known major manufacturer) of the research in which you will participate, engages in product testing and evaluation research to maintain and improve the quality of its products. As a participant in such research, you may be offered the opportunity to sample small quantities of alcoholic beverages. You are never required to sample such beverages, nor are you required to finish any beverage you elect to sample. Indeed, the decision as to whether to sample any product offered during the research is yours alone, and you alone should determine how much of the sample you wish to consume.

The Sponsor considers the health and safety of research participants and the public to be of utmost importance. Therefore, you should refrain from sampling any alcoholic beverage offered as part of this research if you have been advised by your doctor or if you have any medical reason to refrain from consuming alcoholic beverages (beer, coolers, wine or distilled spirits).

You should also refrain from sampling any alcoholic beverage on a given day if:

- you have consumed any beer, coolers, wine or distilled spirits on that day.
- you are taking any prescription or over-the-counter (non-prescription) medication and you have been advised by your doctor, or the label or instructions state, that you should refrain from consuming alcoholic beverages while taking the medication.

In addition, Federal Law requires that alcoholic beverage labels contain the following statement:

GOVERNMENT WARNING:

1. According to the Surgeon General, women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy because of the risk of birth defects.
2. Consumption of alcoholic beverages impairs your ability to drive a car or operate machinery and may cause health problems.

Furthermore, you should follow your doctor's advice if you are pregnant, attempting to become pregnant, or nursing.

You may be asked by the person conducting the research in which you are participating or by other facility personnel to remain at this facility for a period of time after your last sampling of an alcoholic beverage. Moreover, if you appear to be impaired at the end of such time period, you will be provided with an alternative means of transportation to your home and arrangements will be made for you to return at a later date for your car, at the Sponsor's expense.

You acknowledge and agree that you have read this Statement of Policy and fully understand its contents. You further acknowledge that you are of legal drinking age. You further agree that you will release the Sponsor from claims of any nature relating to your participation in this research.

Name of Participant: _____ Age: _____
 (Please Print)
 Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____
 Address: _____

FIG. 1 Sample Sponsor's Statement of Policy

**TABLE 1 Blood Alcohol Concentration (B.A.C.) Chart
 (Percent of Alcohol in Bloodstream)**

Your Weight (lb)	Number of Drinks ^A Consumed								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
100	0.029	0.058	0.088	0.117	0.146	0.175	0.204	0.233	0.262
120	0.024	0.048	0.073	0.097	0.121	0.145	0.170	0.194	0.219
140	0.021	0.042	0.063	0.083	0.104	0.125	0.146	0.166	0.187
160	0.019	0.037	0.055	0.073	0.091	0.109	0.128	0.146	0.164
180	0.017	0.033	0.049	0.065	0.081	0.097	0.113	0.130	0.146
200	0.015	0.029	0.044	0.058	0.073	0.087	0.102	0.117	0.131
220	0.014	0.027	0.040	0.053	0.067	0.080	0.093	0.106	0.119
240	0.012	0.024	0.037	0.048	0.061	0.073	0.085	0.097	0.109

^A One drink equals: 1 oz of 80 proof alcohol; 12-oz bottle of beer; 2 oz of 20 % wine; 3 oz of 12 % wine.

3.4.3 Arrange with employee management "waiting times" after product evaluation before these employees can resume work involving these safety related work activities. Require a

blood alcohol (breath analyzer) test prior to allowing the employee to resume safety-related work activities.

3.4.4 Limit the sample volume for evaluation to an amount